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I am objecting to the certification of Pennsylvania's electoral votes because Governor Tom Wolf, Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar, and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court violated the State legislature's clear constitutional authority to set election proceedings.

Under the Pennsylvania Constitution, only the General Assembly has the power to set election law.

Additionally, Article II of the U.S. Constitution explicitly grants State legislatures, not the Governor acting alone and not the courts, the explicit power to determine the manner of appointing Presidential electors.

Pennsylvania's court unlawfully extended the deadline to receive absentee and mail-in ballots. Governor Wolf's administration dismissed signature authentication procedures for absentee and mail-in ballots, allowed for the uneven administration of the election across counties, and unilaterally changed Pennsylvania's election code without the State legislature's consent.

The Constitution is clear and the facts are indisputable.

This past weekend, each Member of this body stood in this Chamber and swore an oath to protect and defend our Constitution. I intend to fulfill my constitutional oath which the people of Pennsylvania have entrusted in me. My objection is grounded in the Constitution and rule of law.

If we allow the Governor to violate the constitutional rights of the General Assembly, what is stopping him from violating the constitutional rights of the 12.8 million Pennsylvanians our State legislators were elected to represent?

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the objection.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, I represent the Third District of Pennsylvania, which includes part of Philadelphia, the birthplace of America. It was in Philadelphia that the Constitution of the United States was written and signed, the very Constitution that we are all sworn to uphold as Members of the House of Representatives.

We are elected to serve our constituents, and it is our job to represent them and their interests in Congress.

Yesterday, I spoke to the son of the late Dick Thornburgh, who is a two-time Republican Governor of Pennsylvania and was Attorney General under President Ronald Reagan and President Bush. His son stressed to me that his father would have wanted the rule of law to prevail regardless of the political outcome, because he cared more about the safeguarding of democracy than partisanship.

In addition, Al Schmidt, who was a Republican commissioner of elections, said, when Philadelphia certified its results on November 23: "I'm proud that the birthplace of our Republic held the most transparent and secure election in the history of Philadelphia."

Instead of using this time to dispute the results of our fair and lawful election, we should be spending this time making sure vaccines are quickly given to essential workers and our most vulnerable communities, that people are getting housing.

We should look at rental assistance. We should ensure that that is available.

Small businesses, the engines of our economy, should be getting needed grants and loans.

That should be our focus.

Hospitals desperately need support and help. We should be paying attention to the needs of hospitals.

We are in the middle of a pandemic where hundreds of thousands of people are dying, and we are in a recession that is putting millions of Americans at risk of hunger, homelessness, or both. It is time we start legislating for the people.

One last person I want to mention is our junior Senator, Senator TOOMEY. There are very few things that he and I agree on, but he has stated very clearly that Joe Biden has won this election. He has stood up on the Senate floor and he has stated that.

So it needs to be very clear that the late Governor Thornburgh: Albert Schmidt, the commissioner; and our current junior Senator all have one thing in common: democracy first, partisanship second. Let's keep that in mind.

Ms. HERRELL. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the objection.

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Mexico for 5 minutes.

Ms. HERRELL. Madam Speaker, this is not how I imagined my first speech in the House of Representatives or my first week to be in Washington.

The violence that occurred in this building yesterday is reprehensible and inexcusable. I am appalled by anyone who assaults our Nation's law enforcement officers.

I swore an oath on Sunday to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. We are here today delayed, but not deterred, to debate a constitutional question and follow a constitutional process.

The Constitution gives State legislators, not State executives or judges, the sole authority to determine how their State selects Presidential electors.

Nobody disputes that in Pennsylvania, as well as in other States, rules and regulations were changed by executive fiat or judicial edict.

These changes were significant and irregular. They included changes to vote-by-mail deadlines, identity verification requirements, and other ballot handling practices.

In Pennsylvania specifically, the Democrat Secretary of the Commonwealth and the Democrat-controlled Pennsylvania Supreme Court usurped the constitutional authority of the State legislature.

□ 0110

Together, they exceeded their authority by extending the deadline for absentee ballots and by waiving signature requirements for those ballots.

In their haste to make these changes, the secretary and the court created two different and unequal standards for voters. Pennsylvanians who chose to vote in person still had to have their signatures verified at their polling place, but those who chose to vote by mail did not. How is this process fair?

This objection is about Pennsylvania, but it affects every State. As a State Representative of New Mexico, Pennsylvania's unconstitutional actions disenfranchised my constituents and the constituents of my colleagues. It is my duty to give my constituents a voice. Signing these objections raises their concerns to the fullest extent my office allows.

I, again, condemn in the strongest terms the violence that took place here yesterday. We have many issues to solve, including reforms to restore all Americans' faith in the fairness of our elections. I look forward to those serious civil and peaceful debates.

Madam Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, this process we are going through today isn't about personalities. This isn't about Joe Biden or Donald Trump. As hard as some try to paint it that way, let me say that names and personalities don't matter. This is, gravely, about the Constitution of the United States.

Almost 20 years ago, after the attacks on 9/11, Americans were persuaded to give up some of their constitutional liberties. Using the justification of that global crisis, the terrorist attacks on that fateful day, America saw the erosion of their liberties for the safety and security many felt they may receive through the USA PATRIOT Act and other resulting processes too many felt would keep us safe from another attack here on our shore.

This year, using the justification of the global pandemic, COVID-19, we once again saw our Nation's Constitution violated. You see, the Constitution is clear in Article II, Madam Speaker, that the power and duty to set the manner of national elections rests solely with the State legislatures.

That power doesn't rest with us. That power didn't rest in the hands of unelected county election officials, secretaries of state, or a supreme court but, rather, in the hands of the State legislatures, which pass laws setting the manner of elections held in their States.

This year, using the extraordinary circumstance of the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed these duly passed laws circumvented and usurped time and again, not by having the laws changed in the respective State legislative bodies, but those laws arbitrarily

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and unilaterally changed by county clerks; secretaries of state; and, in this case of Pennsylvania, an elected supreme court, which is supposed to interpret the law, not make law.

When those nonlegislative entities change the laws without getting the general assemblies to change the law, in my opinion, the resulting ballots cast, either by mail or in person, those ballots were illegal under the law.

Illegal ballots should not be counted. Therefore, the resulting electoral votes should be considered invalid.

What bothers me is that so many of you are okay with that, that so many Americans, because their person won, you are okay with the manner in which that victory was gained.

It is politics. Look, I get it. But we didn't swear an oath to play politics. We swore an oath to the United States Constitution. As George Washington said: The Constitution is the guide which I will never abandon.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the objection.

The SPEAKER. The gentlewoman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Madam Speaker, first, I do want to acknowledge the devastating events of the last 12 hours and to express my deep appreciation for those who have worked to secure this building and safeguard our democracy. On behalf of my colleagues, we are all grateful for your service.

I ran for this office on a platform of civility and decency, and many of my colleagues and constituents know that I am a third-generation veteran, and I grew up in a military household.

□ 0120

Madam Speaker, what you may not know, though, is that I grew up in a divided household. Throughout my childhood, one parent voted Democrat and the other Republican. In my purple household, I learned that duty to country was far more important than party allegiance. With each election, my father would say: "And when the election is done, we salute smartly and we carry on."

Now I live in and I serve in a community that has a lot in common with the home that I grew up in. It, too, is a purple place that honors civility and decency. Pennsylvania's Sixth District is, in many ways, a microcosm of the Commonwealth and of our Nation. Our voter registration in Chester County is 40-40-20, R, D, and I. Voters across my district commonly split their ticket, some voting for President-elect Biden while also voting down the ballot for Republicans for our State legislature.

What some of my colleagues are arguing today is that those very ballots are illegitimate. My colleagues cannot honestly believe that. In fact, just this week they joined me on the House floor to be sworn in to this hallowed body, and they trusted that the votes cast in their favor were legitimate. And they are right. If those votes counted, then

so too must the votes for President-elect Biden.

We have also heard today concerns about mail-in ballots. I am not a lawyer, but I am an engineer and, therefore, a student of numbers. It wasn't just Democrats who voted by mail. It was not a free-for-all, as it was described earlier. Madam Speaker, 600,000 Republicans in Pennsylvania across the State voted by mail. By questioning the election results, you are telling those Pennsylvanians that the hours they spent in line to cast their ballot or the trip they took to the post office in the middle of a pandemic just didn't matter.

Alan Novak is a man who served as the chair of the Republican Party in Pennsylvania for nearly a decade. I will say that again. The Chair of the Republican Party of Pennsylvania for a decade is one of those voters I am talking about in Pennsylvania. He lives in my district, and he split his ticket. He voted for me as his Member of Congress and also for President Trump. And he eloquently said:

What makes America great, exceptional, and enduring is our commitment to our government of laws, our orderly constitutional process that settles our election disputes, and our peaceful transfer of power with respect and civility. It is easy when it is pretty and the outcome is not controversial. But when it is not pretty and there is controversy, then it is even more important that we respect, honor, and abide by our revered and tested process for the orderly transfer of power. Perhaps that may be all that we can agree on, and it is the need for grace, respect, and civility.

So I ask my colleagues across the aisle: Are you willing to disenfranchise people like Mr. Novak and the more than 400,000 people in Pennsylvania's Sixth District?

Perhaps some of the independent and pragmatic spirit that is so prevalent among voters in my community comes from the history of the place that we call home. Many Americans have visited Philadelphia and our historic sites, but very few make it out to my community, which is the home of Valley Forge. Here, General George Washington led the Continental Army to winter quarters. The war had not been going well for our young soldiers, and that winter was harder still. It was bitterly cold, and food shortages and smallpox were abundant. Many people died.

We remember what happened there because it was a test of our endurance, a demonstration of devotion to mission and to our country over ourselves. Coming out of that awful winter experience, our troops emerged better trained, united, and ultimately victorious. In those harsh, dark times, they found their common ground and their fortitude.

Just like then, it is in these trying moments when we learn who our leaders truly are. They are the ones who don't just represent the people or give orders or ready us for a fight. They are those who educate and who speak

truth. They inspire confidence and unity rather than sowing division and strife. There is a striking parallel between our nascent country and what they endured in Valley Forge and what we are enduring right now: A hard winter of division, illness running rampant, and an uncertain future.

Today, our country's resolve is being tested, and I know that we will pass this test together and be made stronger. We now have the opportunity and the responsibility to do that tonight by upholding the will of the people, by voting to certify the results of this electoral college and by moving forward with a servant heart and a common resolve to preserve this great experiment that is the United States of America.

Mr. BABIN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the objection.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BABIN. It is with great pride and a profound sense of responsibility that I object to the 2020 election in the State of Pennsylvania.

I am very proud to stand alongside fellow patriots who have pushed back against a fraudulent and criminal election process—a process that was the antithesis to the very rule of law that governs these United States.

At the same time, standing here tonight is surreal because this is a critical juncture that will undoubtedly determine the survivability of this great Republic.

Our free and fair election process—and by extension, the people's trust in its legitimacy—is what has separated us as a nation. A process that we have shared with the world, its moral force. A process that now, sadly, has been bastardized by those more interested in the maintenance of power than they are in the free and open voice of the American people.

If I remember correctly, Democrats were calling for transparency in 2000 and 2004, when George W. Bush was elected; and again in 2016, when President Trump took office.

Where are you now?

I ask this, Madam Speaker: What do you have to lose by having a thorough investigation to determine the validity of these votes?

Why not encourage an investigation to relieve the concerns of half of the people in this country?

If you are so convinced that Biden was elected legitimately, what do you have to fear?

If there was no fraud, simply show us the proof. Investigate it. Validate it. This isn't about one candidate versus another. This is about upholding the principles that are indispensable to the existence of the democratic Republic that we are so fortunate to call home.

I have no doubt that there was widespread election fraud this past November, and I am not alone. I stand here today speaking for 75 million Americans whose voice was unconstitutionally silenced.

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To you, the silenced, I say this: I will continue to fight for you. You have been heard. For more than 240 years, tyranny has sought to extinguish the light of freedom.

As Ronald Reagan said before: Freedom is a fragile thing, and it is never more than one generation away from extinction.

The Constitution and the Bible on which it stands is stronger than the cheap tyrannical tactics of those who seek to destroy it.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD).

Mr. BUDD. Madam Speaker, mob violence is not representative of our country or of this building. The American people—at least the ones who are still up watching right now—have seen this body return to a peaceful debate. And that is the American way. So let's get back to that debate and let's talk for a moment about Pennsylvania.

For decades, absentee voting was reserved for members of the military and citizens who are medically or physically unable to get to the polls. But in 2019, Pennsylvania dramatically increased the amount of ballots that would be cast in the Presidential election through expanded, no-excuse, mail-in voting.

On September 17, Pennsylvania's Democrat-controlled Supreme Court violated the Constitution by extending the deadline to receive mail-in ballots. Article II states that legislatures, not the courts, determine the time, manner, and place of their States' elections. But Pennsylvania's high court directed the State officials to assume that non-postmarked ballots were received on time without any evidence that they were sent before election day.

On October 23, while early voting was already underway, the State supreme court ruled that election officials did not have to authenticate signatures for mail-in ballots.

To sum it up, Pennsylvania officials illegally did three critical things:

One, they radically expanded vote by mail for virtually any reason.

Two, they removed restrictions when a ballot can be sent in.

Three, they removed signature verification on those very ballots.

Just this week, the Pennsylvania Senate pleaded with Members of this body to delay certification until the Supreme Court resolves these disputes. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania violated their own constitution. They violated the U.S. Constitution. They opened the door for thousands of unverifiable ballots.

Because they failed to guarantee the integrity of their votes, I cannot consent to accepting Pennsylvania's electoral votes.

□ 0130

Ms. DEAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the challenge.

The SPEAKER. The gentlewoman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DEAN. Madam Speaker, this is a sad day for America—a day of shame, a day of ignominy, an attack on this Capitol, an attack on our country.

Madam Speaker, our words matter. Mobs, thugs, insurrectionists, domestic terrorists attacked our government with the aim of attacking our free and fair elections.

Make no mistake, these terrorists came armed, armed with false flags; armed with hate; armed with weapons; and, tragically, armed with lies forced to them by those at the highest level of government, including some from the legislative and, yes, the executive branches. Incited by the one at the highest level of government, they attacked people, property, this Capitol, this cathedral of democracy.

Words matter. In his last words to our Nation and to all of us here, our dear colleague, John Lewis, wrote last July: "Democracy is not a state. It is an act." And each generation has an obligation to preserve its institutions.

Democracy is a series of acts, acts by you and by me, by citizens, one building upon the other and another—not acts that we have heard and seen and suffered today, words and acts to incite violence, acts that tear at the very fabric of our democracy.

Madam Speaker, yet, I have hope. We, too, are armed. We are armed with the facts. We are armed with the truth. We are armed with the love of our country. We are armed with our sworn oaths. And we are armed with our precious Constitution.

We have faced tyranny and insurrection before. We are here tonight to herald to America and to the world; We will defend our democracy, and we will endure.

Madam Speaker, when I came into work this morning, as I was preparing to come to the floor, I read Tom Friedman's op-ed, which began with the words from the Gospel of Mark: For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his soul?

For what shall it profit any man.

Madam Speaker, I urge my Republican colleagues to have the courage to uphold their oath, courage like that of Congresswoman Margaret Chase Smith, a lifelong Republican and the first in her party to speak out against McCarthyism. Putting duty over fear, she said: "I do not want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the Four Horsemen of Calumny—Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry, and Smear. Surely, we Republicans are not that desperate for victory."

Madam Speaker, for today, we have seen the cost of victory by such means. It shook the very walls of this building. Our colleagues know there is no truth to this challenge.

For what shall it profit a man.

Madam Speaker, it has been my solemn honor to participate in this sad day. I pray for our country.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Madam Speaker, I rise to support the objection of the electoral certification of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The SPEAKER. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Madam Speaker, as a new Representative here, I did not envision my first speech on the House floor to be this, here tonight, but rather, a tribute to our first responders and frontline workers who have been a shining light in an otherwise tough year for us all.

After the events tonight, I am especially grateful for our men and women who put service above self, confronting lawlessness and danger while protecting this very Chamber, its Members, and our constitutional Republic.

As a Member of the people's House, and the wife of a first responder, thank you to our law enforcement here today. But, especially, after tonight's unacceptable breach of the people's House, I am furthermore resolved in the fact that we, as representatives of the people, must take a stand for every American's right to a free and fair election as guaranteed by the Constitution.

Article I, Section 4, Clause 1 of the Constitution explicitly rests the time and manner of our elections in the hands of our State legislatures. However, State law in the 2020 election was modified or circumvented without approval of the State legislature. These actions are in clear violation of the Constitution, specifically Article II, Section 1, Clause 2, which grants State legislatures the sole authority to establish how State Presidential electors are appointed.

These changes, along with other election irregularities throughout the 2020 election, require me, as a Member of this body, to object to the certification of these electoral votes, just as my colleagues across the aisle have objected to every Republican Presidential election over the last 20 years.

Tonight, as we undertake the very serious responsibility of debating these State electoral certifications, I urge my colleagues to listen earnestly and with an open mind, remembering that just 3 days ago, we swore an oath to the United States Constitution, not a political party.

Our constituents are counting on us. Our country is counting on us. Our children are counting on us, and we cannot let them down.

Madam Speaker, in December, 25 of my freshman colleagues and I sent you a letter imploring you to investigate these election irregularities. To date, we have not received a response. That brings us to today.

My colleagues across the aisle have repeatedly invoked our Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin, who famously said: We have a republic, if we can keep it.

I say, let's keep it.

Madam Speaker, it is with that sentiment in mind that I ask my colleagues to defend the power vested in this legislative branch by the U.S. Constitution and reject the certification of the electoral votes of the State in question. It is our responsibility to have

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courage in the face of adversity and bring integrity back to this process.

Madam Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from the great State of Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON).

Mr. ARRINGTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the great State of Florida (Mrs. CAMMACK), my friend.

Madam Speaker, as Americans, we believe governments receive their just powers from the consent of the governed. That sacred transaction can only happen legitimately in a free and fair election.

Election integrity is the very lifeblood of our unrivaled system of self-government. The law and the Constitution gave Congress not only the authority but, I believe, the responsibility to serve as the last check on the integrity of our Presidential elections. We either believe, according to statute, that every elector was "lawfully certified" and "regularly given," or we don't.

States certainly have broad delegated powers to administer Federal elections, but they still must operate within the bounds of the Constitution.

Despite receiving numerous petitions—to the detriment of the country, I might add—the Supreme Court failed to answer the most important question of the 2020 election: Can entities outside of the State legislatures make election law?

The plain language of Article II of the Constitution answers the question unequivocally no.

The decisions made today in these Chambers are of the utmost consequence, and the horrible precedent that will be established if we don't act will have lasting impact on our beloved Republic.

Madam Speaker, this proceeding is not just about the integrity of this election. It is about ensuring the integrity of all future elections.

I take no pleasure or pride in making my objection today, nor do I wish for any State electors to be disqualified. However, based on the law, the Constitution, and my conscience, I cannot support certifying votes from any State that violated the Constitution.

Madam Speaker, this decision is not about loyalty to a President. It is about my fidelity to the Constitution and the oath that I swore.

Mr. LAMB. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMB. Madam Speaker, I came here tonight prepared to talk about the place I represent and how well the Democratic and Republican county officials ran our election. I wanted to point out that in my home county of Allegheny County, in the place they were counting the votes, there were 31 video cameras—31—in the same place, just showing people counting votes, every single one of them on paper, with representatives from both campaigns watching.

Madam Speaker, I wanted to point out to all these great lovers and supporters of the Pennsylvania legislature that it was the Republican Pennsylvania legislature that passed a Republican bill that they all voted for and supported that set up the system under which we just ran the election, and that the reason the President lost was because he was not as popular as other Republicans in our State. He got fewer votes than all of them.

Madam Speaker, I wanted to lay out all this evidence because I thought it was a sign of respect for my colleagues and for all the Americans out there who don't know who to trust. I was raised on that. I was raised on that respect, which makes this a hard speech for me to give. Because to do this with any kind of honesty means admitting and declaring in this House that these objections don't deserve an ounce of respect—not an ounce.

□ 0140

A woman died out there tonight, and you are making these objections.

Let's be clear about what happened in this Chamber today. Invaders came in for the first time since the War of 1812. They desecrated these Halls and this Chamber and practically every inch of ground where we work. For the most part, they walked in here free. A lot of them walked out free. There wasn't a person watching at home who didn't know why that was—because of the way that they look.

My point, Madam Speaker, is this: Enough has been done here already to try to strip this Congress of its dignity, and these objectors don't need to do anymore.

We know that that attack today didn't materialize out of nowhere. It was inspired by lies, the same lies that you are hearing in this room tonight. And the Members who are repeating those lies should be ashamed of themselves. Their constituents should be ashamed of them.

We know what is going to happen as soon as I walk away, what has happened all night tonight, what will continue to happen. They will take these same symbols, these same concepts, smuggle them into their arguments, and make the same arguments. I want people at home, anyone who is still watching, to know that these arguments are not for them; they are for you.

None of the evidence we wanted to discuss here tonight will change their opinions or what they are about to say. But you need to know that is not the end. It is not as if there is nothing we can do because of that. And if there was, I don't think this Nation would have made it to almost 250 years.

The fact is, Madam Speaker, that at the end of the day, people—

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. GRIFFITH. Madam Speaker, point of order.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Yes, ma'am. The point of order would be that the gentleman said that there were lies on this floor here today, looking over in this direction. I ask that those words be taken down.

We may have a disagreement on matters, but—

The SPEAKER.

The gentleman's demand is not timely.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania will proceed.

Mr. LAMB. Madam Speaker, the fact is, at the end of the day, it hurts. It hurts them; it hurts this country. It hurts all of us. But the fact is that the people have made this country work by not giving in.

Go ahead. Shout it out.

One last thing to say, Madam Speaker. And I thank you for your patience. All people need to know tonight. Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker, the truth hurts. But the fact is this: We want this government to work more than they want it to fail.

After everything that has happened today, we want that more than ever. Know that. Know that, the people watching at home. We want this government to work. We will make it work. They will not make it fail.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. PERRY. When is the appropriate time to ask that the words be stricken, be taken down?

The SPEAKER. Immediately after the words are uttered.

For what purpose does the gentleman from Louisiana seek recognition?

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the objection.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, my, my, my. Let us take a deep breath, shall we?

Madam Speaker, the cornerstone of the strength of our American Republic is not only the peaceful transition of power; it is the peaceful transition of a lawful power. It is within the parameters of our oath, indeed, is our duty to inquire if we suspect that perhaps our elections have been compromised.

Much has been said about what we do not know. What we do not know calls for investigation.

What we do know is that, in the disputed States, Governors, secretaries of state, or local election commissions acted in violation of the Election Clause of the U.S. Constitution, wherein State legislatures are granted the sole authority to determine how Presidential electors are appointed. It is that simple. State executive officials usurped the constitutionally vested authority of State legislatures within several of the sovereign States.

Now, why we are involved in Congress? Because the Founders gave us a

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narrow role. If we suspect that an election was compromised in a sovereign State, then we have a role in the seating of those electors and the counting.

America is not a confederacy of States. We are a union of States. We are a representative republic. Therefore, each sovereign State has a deep obligation to follow the writ of its own election law during a Federal election.

We would not be having this conversation if our objections were solely rested upon the elections of sovereign State Governors or State senators and representatives. It is a Federal election for the President and Vice President of the United States. We certainly have a role, and we should investigate and support that role.

Madam Speaker, America is an anointed nation, born of imperfect men driven by perfect intent. May we be worthy of what it is to be an American, what it is to be a representative of the American people.

May I ask, may we seek the quiet whisper of God's own voice within us. And I ask my colleagues to consider supporting this objection.

I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. VAN DREW).

Mr. VAN DREW. Madam Speaker, before I start, something I didn't plan on saying. This is a debate. It is a discussion. Everybody has a right to an opinion. That is American. Because someone doesn't agree with your view or your ideas does not mean that they are liars. It means they have a different view, a different opinion.

And I think, for God's sake, as people watch this or see it or hear it, they expect more from us than that. We can disagree at a certain level. There is nothing worse than moral pomposity.

You know, today was an amazing and terrible day. But one thing that we do know is that our law enforcement protected lives, and they protected and preserved our democracy. I watched firsthand, as I always have, just as I do back home in south Jersey, these brave men and women put their lives on the line to defend all of us.

May God bless the woman who lost her life today, and may God bless what will always be the greatest Nation in the history of the world: the United States of America.

At the core of our country's greatness is our democratic system of government. Without faith in the integrity of our elections, Americans will not have faith in our democracy.

The United States of America is the international embodiment of freedom and opportunity, the shining city on a hill. Free and fair elections have always been a hallmark of America's greatness.

After this past Presidential election, approximately 60 million Americans have serious doubts about the outcome. That is a number that we cannot ignore.

□ 0150

Ms. SCANLON. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the objection.

The SPEAKER. The gentlewoman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCANLON. Madam Speaker, I started this day disheartened that our colleagues were going to drag us through this cynical political charade of objecting to duly certified electoral college votes, but I was ready and eager to defend Pennsylvania's elections and the will of Pennsylvania's voters.

Never did I expect to be answering calls from family and friends concerned for my safety or to have to barricade myself in an office. But most important of all, never did I expect to see our Capitol overrun by armed insurrectionists intent on disrupting our government at the urging of the President.

What happened here today has made me heart-sick for our country, but it only strengthens my resolve to uphold the rule of law and to protect the decision of Pennsylvania's voters.

Earlier this week, we raised our hands and swore an oath to bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. But, today, those who are blocking the counting of electors from Pennsylvania are showing that their allegiance lies not to the Constitution or to their constituents, and many would argue not even to the Republican Party, but to their own political fortunes and the outgoing President.

Pennsylvania's voters, not Members of Congress, are tasked with choosing Pennsylvania's Presidential electors, and particularly not congressmen from other States. The people have spoken, and Pennsylvania certified our electors. We must respect our oath here by rejecting this unfounded objection to Pennsylvania's electoral votes, and not substitute Congress' judgment for that of the people of Pennsylvania.

Legal challenges to elections are serious matters, and that is why there is a place to consider those challenges: In courtrooms before impartial judges.

And Pennsylvania's legal process has worked. The pseudo-legal arguments that are being raised by the objectors here today are not new. Over the past 2 months, the President and his allies have filed more than 20 lawsuits to challenge the Pennsylvania election. Those challenges have been rejected in Federal courts, State courts, appellate courts, and the United States Supreme Court. Challenges have been rejected by judges who are registered Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and who have been appointed by Democratic and Republican Presidents.

And why did they lose all those cases?

As Third Circuit Judge Bibas, a Trump appointee, wrote, "Free, fair elections are the lifeblood of our democracy. Charges of unfairness are serious. But calling an election unfair does not make it so. Charges require specific allegations and then proof. We have neither here."

What the Court said points to an important distinction about when and

how claims of election misconduct are made. It is easy to make wild claims of election fraud on cable television or Twitter, but those claims are not facts. And while there may be no immediate consequences for misleading the public with such statements, there is certainly a penalty for misleading the courts.

A lawyer faces fines, jail, and loss of his or her license for making frivolous or false claims. The lawyers for the Trump campaign never alleged widespread fraud or illegal voting had impacted Pennsylvania's elections because those claims are false.

When our colleagues indulge in this political theatre and endorse fringe conspiracy theories, they may think there are no consequences because they know that this time the majorities of the House and Senate will overrule them. But as the entire world saw today, their baseless claims of election fraud do have consequences. They undermine faith and respect for our elections and our government. They chip away at the foundation of our constitutional Republic and they take a sledgehammer to the peaceful transfer of power. It is our job to respect the rule of law and reject this political charade.

Finally, I want to offer my deepest respect to our Republican colleagues in both the House and the Senate who have withstood intense political pressure, and today honor their oath in the rule of law by rejecting these unfounded objections.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in favor of the objection.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I would first like to say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who said we should be ashamed over here, I am not ashamed, and neither are my colleagues over here. We are actually proud of what we are doing and what we are standing for. So I hope the RECORD will show that.

Yesterday's cowardly attack on our American democracy was a horrible act. While Congress attempted to execute their constitutional duty to debate and vote on this certification of the electoral college, violence interrupted the proceedings in an attempt to stop the democratic process.

Those who committed these acts are domestic terrorists and should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. And I thank the Capitol Police and all of the law enforcement organizations that pushed back against this mob.

I can't help but be reminded of the bravery during the baseball shooting on myself and my Republican colleagues in June of 2017. I thank God every day for their presence.

The American people deserve full transparency in the electoral process, with confidence that any irregularities and inconsistencies in that process will be fully investigated.

As a former Texas secretary of state, I know the electoral process well. And

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above all, I know what the courts, the executive branch, and the elections officials can and cannot do without approval of the State legislature. During my tenure, I knew that my authority was confined to the powers the legislature provided me. If States fail to abide by the Constitution and follow their own laws, it calls into question whether the votes in Texas, or any other State, are fairly represented.

And now, as a duly elected Member of Congress, the Constitution outlines my rights to speak and voice my constituents' concerns with my vote. It is pivotal that we have free and fair elections in our representative democracy and, more importantly, that we trust in the results of those elections.

In no way is voicing an objection an attempt to overturn an election. And when this process is complete and all objections have been heard, I acknowledge that we will have a peaceful transfer of power on January 20.

Faith in our system must be restored and Americans must be confident that their vote matters, and only lawful votes will be counted. This is a sad day in our Nation's history, but a solemn reminder that our country will not falter and will not fail. In God we trust.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. CAWTHORN).

Mr. CAWTHORN. Madam Speaker, as I said in my convention speech, I want a new generation of Americans to be radicals—to be radicals for freedom and for liberty, but not radicals for violence. I am bitterly disappointed by the protest that happened yesterday. The actions of a violent few were cowardly and pathetic, and I am not afraid to call it out.

The Republican Party is a party of limited government. It is the big tent party. It is not the party of destruction.

Madam Speaker, the oath I took just days ago demand that I speak out in defense not of one President or another, but in defense of a hallowed document that has safeguarded this Republic for over 200 years. The Constitution grants power solely to State legislatures to determine how elections are carried out. When other officials who are not vested with constitutional authority usurp their role and grind the Constitution under their heel, I must object.

□ 0200

Our Nation is a nation of resilience. In Valley Forge, George Washington prayed for a republic to be formed from the ashes of a monarchy. At Gettysburg, Americans gave their lives to defend a very simple idea, that the American democracy that had been earned with the blood of their forefathers would not perish due to internal division.

Then, on the islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, American servicemen gave their lives to defend this Nation's freedom from fascism.

What unites each and every generation of Americans is the idea that those who submit themselves to the authority of government ought to have a voice in that same government.

We are Americans here in this Chamber and in this country. But what does it really mean to be an American? It means believing in the rule of law. It means speaking up in defense of our founding principles and in defense of the Constitution.

Being an American means that you are proud of your country but that you never beat your chest. And being an American means that sometimes you must stand alone while others sit.

Now, obviously, I can't stand, but trust me, if I could stand, I would stand in defense of our Constitution today.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague Representative DWIGHT EVANS, and I remind this Chamber that Pennsylvania is the cradle of American democracy.

We can't claim to be the birthplace of American democracy. That would be a disservice to James Otis, Jr., who, in 1761, stood up in a Massachusetts courtroom and argued against the King's writs of assistance.

But Pennsylvania is the cradle of democracy. It is where we hosted the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution.

It was Pennsylvanians who immediately went to battle to defend this idea of democracy. They went right after Bunker Hill to the Siege of Boston. American riflemen were instrumental at the transformational Battles of Trenton and Saratoga in victory. And it is Independence Hall where these documents got signed, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

You heard my colleagues. You heard Representative HOULAHAN talking about the privations at Valley Forge, all in support of creating democracy.

You heard Representative BRENDAN F. BOYLE quoting John Adams, that democracy only dies by suicide.

You heard Representative DEAN quoting John Lewis, our hero, who said: Democracy is not a state. It is an act.

You heard Representative WILD talking about this stunning assault on our democracy.

If it seems like we get a little prickly in Pennsylvania about assaulting democracy, you are right. We do. Pennsylvania is the cradle of democracy.

You heard how foolish and empty these challenges are. Representative LAMB said it: 31 cameras filming the place where the count was happening, resulting in thousands of hours of videotape—you can see it on YouTube—proving there was no fraud.

You heard Representatives MICHAEL F. DOYLE and BRENDAN F. BOYLE talk-

ing about Act 77, how the Republicans in Pennsylvania were falling all over themselves to pass this law for mail-in voting because they thought it would help them.

You heard Representative SCANLON explaining why there were no allegations of fraud made in court because a lawyer going into court and lying to the court gets his or her ticket to practice law punched. They can be disbarred.

Politicians can say anything on cable TV, but they have to be darn careful when they are in court. So all these big TV talkers never alleged fraud in court.

Let me tell you about one court case. It was a case where they brought on their best legal talent. It was a case where they drew as a judge a staunch, principled, conservative Republican, Judge Matthew Brann. He called this case "strained legal arguments without merit" and "speculative accusations." He called it "like Frankenstein's monster," a "haphazardly stitched together" case.

Judge Brann said he "has no authority to take away the right to vote of even a single person, let alone millions of citizens."

On appeal Judge Bibas, a Trump appointee writing for the Third Circuit, agreed. He said: "Calling an election unfair does not make it so. Charges require specific allegations and then proof. We have neither here."

So, we have judges—dozens and dozens of them. Federal judges. State judges. Democrats. Republicans—turning away these challenges. All they ever wanted was evidence.

Here is the number-one rule when you go to court: Don't forget to bring the evidence with you.

This objection, in all seriousness, reflects the most profound disrespect to our American judiciary. We Pennsylvanians understand democracy. It was in Pennsylvania that our Founders signed the Constitution, and Article II makes it plain as day: We elect our President. We don't have a king.

If you can undo a Presidential election simply by alleging that something was amiss, then we don't have a democracy at all. We have something else entirely.

And if we vote to sustain this objection, we are not upholding our Constitution at all. We are doing something else entirely.

Let's vote "no" on this objection.

Mr. DAVIDSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this objection.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIDSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, every one of us swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, both foreign and domestic. I swore that oath in uniform, and the first part of that oath is the same as what we swear here in Congress.

The last time we needed to defend our Constitution against a domestic

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enemy, we fought a civil war. And at the conclusion of that Civil War we passed the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments that make clear that no State is so sovereign that they can deprive their citizens of equal protection of the laws.

When it comes to elections, that means one person gets one vote. It doesn't mean that other citizens can dilute the votes of other citizens and deprive them of equal protection. And it doesn't mean that a State can do that by law or by practice.

So whether the law was changed and made it such that there is no way to provide equal protection—one person, one vote—or the practice was corrupted, it cannot stand. Frankly, lastly, it must guarantee that there is a proof that it was equal protection under the law.

None of that happened in a number of States. The people of America, tens of millions of them who came out to vote, have been unheard by this body and by far too many courts. We need to show them the respect they are due by the Constitution of the United States of America, the Constitution that we fought to sustain to end the era of Jim Crow to pass civil rights legislation, the Voting Rights Act, the Civil Rights Act, and so many other pieces of jurisprudence.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DAVIDSON of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman needs to maintain his position and control of the time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this objection and to give voice to the 249,386 men and women of Ohio's Sixth Congressional District who have had their voices silenced by the rogue political actors in Pennsylvania who unilaterally and unconstitutionally altered voting methods to benefit the Democratic candidate for President.

Secretaries of state and State supreme courts cannot simply ignore the rules governing elections set forth in the Constitution. They cannot choose to usurp their state legislatures to achieve a partisan end. Constitution be damned.

Madam Speaker, this is a sad day for America. We have seen too many sad days like this recently: assaults on courthouses, police stations, and now the U.S. Capitol. People who disagree with the results of police work and court decisions are wrong to respond violently. And people who disagree with the results of an election are also wrong to respond with violence. Thank you to the Capitol Police and all the law enforcement involved for protecting the people's House today.

Madam Speaker, some may question our motives for raising these objections, but other than the Bible, our Constitution is the most sacred document known to man because it created the most free and prosperous nation in human history.

□ 0210

2021 has the chance to be remembered for when the leaders of a deeply divided America came together to defend that sacred document and to ensure that the integrity of future Presidential elections is ensured. It is imperative we take this opportunity. The future of our Republic depends on it.

Benjamin Franklin, in the summer of 1787, during the heated debate to create our sacred Constitution, said these famous words: "I have lived long, sir, a long time . . . and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth . . . that God governs in the affairs of men."

"And, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writing that 'Except the Lord build it, they labor in vain that build it.'"

Madam Speaker, I pray that we would turn to the God Almighty that ordained our Nation into being to help us in our time of need.

Mr. KINZINGER. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the objection.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Illinois is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINZINGER. Madam Speaker, as a student of foreign policy, if somebody described to me the actions that we saw, I would have assumed we were in a failed nation or a banana republic. Storming past police, some carrying the flag of the Confederacy, the mob breached this House.

But there is good news: The democracy held today.

For the last few years, misinformation and fear has been fed into people for profit and power, and for too many years, leaders around the country said nothing and sometimes echoed those messages because of the belief that winning, no matter the cost, was worth everything.

Today, we saw the result of ignoring these warning signs.

People look to Washington to give hope. Instead, we simply amplify fears.

People look to us for expertise on what can and can't be possible. Sometimes it is easier to say what makes people feel good instead of the hard facts.

Today, some Members of Congress argue that we can unilaterally pick the next President, that with our glorious wisdom, armed with Twitter, we know better than the American people. Some have shown that, if conspiracies are repeated enough, they become facts and they aren't disputed.

Even here in this Chamber after the events today, some speeches have been shockingly tone-deaf. I have seen people applaud cheap political lines that are embarrassing.

Power and cultural fights have divided us so much that they are the ultimate goal now, and sometimes the oath we swear to uphold feels like a prop.

People have been lied to by too many for too long.

So here is the truth: Joe Biden won this election, the effort will fail, and everybody knows it.

For some out there, this isn't about making a statement for the betterment of our country; it is about avoiding the pain of leveling with the people and telling them the truth: the emperor has no clothes.

I know many are disappointed in the result, but what legacy are we leaving? Have our kids seen the day where Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill had a beer over their differences, or have they learned that to lead, you must tweet, and sometimes all in caps, because now this is Hollywood, fame is the ultimate goal?

But the first step that we can take to restore this is to reject the charade, and what happens next is up to us.

We get threatened with primaries; we worry about the political implications. But our names will long be forgotten: the legacy of now will exist.

The bottom line: If we ask men and women to be willing to give their lives for this Nation and we talk about their service with tears in our eyes, shouldn't we be willing to give up our jobs to uphold that Constitution?

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER).

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. Madam Speaker, is this a country, is this an America that we want to give to our children, a country of lawlessness, of might makes right, of mob rule?

Previous generations of Americans have laid down their lives to answer "no" to that question. I do not want to be the first generation of Americans so selfish as to answer "yes." Nothing is more important to me than preserving this constitutional Republic as a Representative.

Article II of the Constitution states: "Each State shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors," meaning that it is the duty of the State legislatures to select their electors in a manner they stipulate. It is right here.

The Founders of our Republic did not want to federalize elections, which is why they reserved the selection of electors to the State legislatures.

Historically, when Congress intervened in the electoral process, it was in the Civil War. It was when States were sending multiple slates of electors. But that is not the case today.

Of the six States actively being contested, five have Republican legislatures; five are controlled by one party; five have the authority to get together and to vote to change the elector that they sent to us.

How many of the six did? Not one.

Pennsylvania did not get together and vote as a body and send us a new slate of electors. They did not send us a bill or a resolution citing injustice at the State level.

None of them.

Are they cowards? Do they not know the Constitution? Have they not read

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it, like you and I? Or are they merely passing the buck?

Here is the reality. Look, I believe this was not a fraud-free election. I believe that there were problems in Pennsylvania and in Georgia. But the Constitution gives us the right to fix that at the State level, not throw out the electoral college. We do not want to absolve the responsibility of the people in those States to hold their own law-makers accountable.

I, as a Washington State Congresswoman, don't know better than the people in Pennsylvania and Georgia.

Folks, we can't vote to undermine the electoral college today. We have to uphold it.

Mr. POSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the objection.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POSEY. Madam Speaker, as you have heard from both sides of the aisle over and over and over today and tonight, Members of Congress take an oath to protect and defend the Constitution.

Clearly, the Constitution says State legislatures make voting laws, period, end of subject. And, clearly, in Pennsylvania and some other States, non-legislators changed those voting laws.

No matter who wins or who loses, those are violations of the Constitution whether you, me, or anyone else likes it or not.

As Congressman DAVIDSON pointed out, over a dozen FBI agents were immediately dispatched to fully investigate Bubba Wallace's garage door. But, sadly, the FBI never responded to my request to investigate massive voting irregularity accusations, like the video footage from Georgia that we all wished we didn't see.

Neither has the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, the Postal Inspector General, the Director of National Intelligence, the CIA, and, saddest of all, the U.S. Department of Justice.

The right to vote is not only a constitutional right, it is also a civil right, and we must protect it. Running a fair and transparent election is not something America should run away from. It is something we must live up to.

Every eligible American has a right to have their vote counted and the right to feel confident that his or her vote was counted, not neutralized by an illegal vote.

□ 0220

Otherwise, I fear our Republic is doomed. That is why I implore you to support a full investigation.

Madam Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the fine gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, this has been an interesting day. And I know we want to debate this, and we brought up all kinds of things, all kinds of points of history and what happened and where it happened and all the rest of this, and we

are very, very grateful to the Capitol Police and all those who came in to protect us.

But the real debate right now about Pennsylvania is Pennsylvania's Act 77. Was it constitutional or was it unconstitutional? All the rest of the trimmings you can set aside and just decide: Was it constitutional or unconstitutional?

Act 77 changed Pennsylvania's voting law and Pennsylvania's Constitution.

Now, Pennsylvania could change that law, but it is done through an amendment to the constitution. It is not just done because somebody would like to see that done.

We had a mail ballot that was available. It was an absentee ballot. We did not have a no-excuse ballot.

What did Pennsylvania have to do to get to the point where they would have a no-excuse mail-in ballot?

Number one, in two successive sessions of the Pennsylvania Legislature, that had to be passed in that legislation, one session after the other. If it passed both times, then it had to be published in every one of the 67 counties of Pennsylvania, twice. When that was finished, it then had to go before the Pennsylvania voters to decide whether they wanted the constitution amended.

Pennsylvania did the first one. They actually did take a vote, and it was overwhelming. But then they scrapped it, and they put it in an omnibus bill. That is an unconstitutional change. You cannot do it. It is that simple.

So I love the idea about Washington crossing the Delaware. I love the idea about Washington going through a terrible winter.

I hate the idea of what we had to go through today. But if oaths don't matter, and we have all taken them, and if the Constitution doesn't matter, why do we even do it? Why go through this charade that somehow we are really close friends, except when it comes to the really important things?

We have driven this country apart through the people's House, and we wonder what happened?

The biggest loss on November 3 was not by Donald Trump; it was the faith and trust that the American people lost in this voting system because we have allowed it to happen. It is unconstitutional.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, 80 years ago today, Franklin Roosevelt delivered his third inaugural address. "Every realist knows," he said, "that the democratic way of life at this moment is being directly assailed in every part of the world—assailed either by arms, or by the secret spreading of poisonous propaganda by those who would seek to destroy unity and promote discord in nations still at peace."

Today, the principal threat to our democracy comes from a different but

also poisonous propaganda of those who seek to destroy our unity and promote discord.

According to this propaganda, America cannot conduct a free or fair election. Our elections are rigged and doomed.

According to this propaganda, the voters can no longer decide who shall be President. The Congress must decide for them.

At a time when our Nation faces an unprecedented health crisis, with thousands dying every day, with Americans struggling to put food on the table and keep a roof over their head, who are we to say that the man America chose to lead us out of this calamity shall not take office?

The coronavirus will claim more American lives than all of the casualties in World War II. To meet that moment will require unity, not discord; will require an abiding faith in our country, in our democracy, in our government's ability to function and provide for the needs of its citizens.

The Members of this body cannot continue to challenge the merits of an election that was fairly conducted and overwhelmingly won by Joe Biden. It must stop.

Look at the damage that was wrought in this House today, to this country today. Is that not enough?

Roosevelt said: "This Nation has placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women. . . . Our strength," he concluded "is our unity of purpose."

Let us unite once again in defense of the greatest hope of freedom-loving people around the world, this precious democracy.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN).

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, the baseless attack on Pennsylvania and its electors brought to mind, for me, the great Tom Paine, the champion of popular democracy, who came over to America to fight with us in the Revolution against the king. He lived in Philadelphia, where he wrote "Common Sense" and "The Age of Reason." And Paine said: In the monarchies, the king is the law; but in the democracies, the law will be king.

When you think about it, the peaceful transfer of power is the central condition of maintaining democracy under the rule of law. That is why the famous election of 1801 was such a big deal.

When John Adams relinquished the Presidency to his passionate adversary and lifelong friend Thomas Jefferson, it was the first peaceful transition of power between democracies in a democratic republic in the history of the world.

And he said, as he rode back to Massachusetts from Washington, Adams said that he did this because we are a government of laws and not of men. We will betray this principle if we trade a government of laws for a government of men or, even worse, a single man, or an impressionable and dangerous mob

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intent on violent sedition and insurrection against our beloved democratic Republic.

Here is Abraham Lincoln right before the war. At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected? I would answer, if it ever reaches us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must, ourselves, be its author and its finisher.

Madam Speaker, my family suffered an unspeakable trauma on New Year's Eve a week ago. But mine was not the only family to suffer such terrible pain in 2020. Hundreds of thousands of families in America are still mourning their family members. Many families represented in the Congress are still mourning their family members who have been taken away from us by COVID-19, by the opioid crisis, by cancer, by gun violence, by the rising fatalities associated with the crisis in mental and emotional health.

Enough, my beloved colleagues. It is time for America to heal. It is time for our families and communities to come together. Let us stop pouring salt in the wounds of America for no reason at all. Let us start healing our beloved land and our wonderful people.

The SPEAKER. All time for debate has expired.

The question is, Shall the objection submitted by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) be agreed to.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Members are reminded to vote when their group is called and to leave the Chamber after they have voted.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 138, nays 282, not voting 11, as follows:

(Roll No. 11)

YEAS—138

| | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Aderholt | Cole | Green (TX) |
| Allen | Crawford | Greene (GA) |
| Arrington | Davidson | Griffith |
| Babin | DesJarlais | Guest |
| Baird | Diaz-Balart | Hagedorn |
| Banks | Donalds | Harris |
| Bentz | Duncan | Harshbarger |
| Bergman | Dunn | Hartzler |
| Rice (OK) | Estes | Hern |
| Biggs | Fallon | Herrell |
| Bishop (NC) | Fischbach | Hice (GA) |
| Boebert | Fitzgerald | Higgins (LA) |
| Bost | Fleischmann | Hudson |
| Brooks | Fox | Issa |
| Budd | Franklin, C. | Jackson |
| Burchett | Scott | Jacobs (NY) |
| Burgess | Fulcher | Johnson (LA) |
| Calvert | Gaetz | Johnson (OH) |
| Cammack | Garcia (CA) | Jordan |
| Carl | Gibbs | Joyce (PA) |
| Carter (GA) | Jimenez | Keller |
| Carter (TX) | Gohmert | Kelly (MS) |
| Cawthorn | Good (VA) | Kelly (PA) |
| Chabot | Goudin (TX) | Kustoff |
| Cline | Gosar | LaMalfa |
| Cloud | Graves (LA) | Lamborn |
| Clyde | Graves (MO) | Lesko |

| | | |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Long | Owens | Smucker |
| Loudermilk | Palazzo | Stefanik |
| Lucas | Palmer | Steube |
| Luetkemeyer | Pence | Stewart |
| Malliotakis | Perry | Thompson (PA) |
| Mann | Pfleger | Tiffany |
| Mast | Posey | Timmons |
| McCarthy | Reschenthaler | Van Drew |
| McClain | Rice (SC) | Van Duyne |
| Meuser | Rogers (AL) | Walbers |
| Miller (IL) | Rogers (KY) | Walorski |
| Miller (WV) | Rose | Weber (TX) |
| Mooney | Rosendale | Webster (FL) |
| Moore (AL) | Rouzer | Williams (TX) |
| Mullin | Rutherford | Wilson (SC) |
| Murphy (NC) | Scalise | Wittman |
| Nehls | Schweikert | Wright |
| Norman | Sessions | Zeldin |
| Nunes | Smith (MO) | |
| Obenholte | Smith (NE) | |

NAYS—282

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Adams | Espallat | Lieu |
| Anzular | Evans | Lofgren |
| Allred | Feenstra | Lowenthal |
| Amodei | Ferguson | Luna |
| Armstrong | Fitzpatrick | Lynch |
| Auchincloss | Fletcher | Mace |
| Axne | Fortenberry | Malinowski |
| Bacon | Foster | Maloney |
| Balderson | Frankel, Lou | Carolyn B. |
| Barr | Fudge | Maloney, Sean |
| Barragan | Gallagher | Manning |
| Bass | Gallagher | Mastie |
| Beatty | Garamendi | Matsui |
| Bera | Garbarino | McBath |
| Beyer | Garcia (IL) | McCaul |
| Bishop (GA) | Garcia (TX) | McClintock |
| Blumenauer | Golden | McCollum |
| Blunt | Gomez | McEachin |
| Bonamici | Gonzales, Tony | McGovern |
| Boudeaux | Gonzalez (OH) | McHenry |
| Bowman | Gonzalez | McKinley |
| Boyle, Brendan | Vicente | McNerney |
| F. | Gotthelmer | Meeks |
| Brown | Green, Al (TX) | Meijer |
| Brownley | Grijalva | Meng |
| Buchanan | Grothman | Mfume |
| Bucshon | Guthrie | Miller-Meeks |
| Bush | Haaland | Moolenaar |
| Bustos | Harder (CA) | Moore (UT) |
| Butterfield | Hayes | Moore (WI) |
| Carbajal | Herrera Beutler | Morelle |
| Cardenas | Higgins (NY) | Moulton |
| Carson | Hill | Mryan |
| Cartwright | Himes | Murphy (FL) |
| Case | Hinson | Nadler |
| Casten | Hollingsworth | Napolitano |
| Castor (FL) | Horstford | Neal |
| Castro (TX) | Houlahan | Neguse |
| Cheney | Hoyer | Newhouse |
| Chu | Huffman | Newman |
| Cicilline | Huizenga | Norcross |
| Clark (MA) | Jackson Lee | O'Halleran |
| Clarke (NY) | Jacobs (CA) | Ocasio-Cortez |
| Cleaver | Jayapal | Omar |
| Clyburn | Jeffries | Pallone |
| Cohen | Johnson (GA) | Panetta |
| Comer | Johnson (SD) | Pappas |
| Connolly | Johnson (TX) | Pascarelli |
| Cooper | Jones | Payne |
| Correa | Kahale | Pelosi |
| Costa | Kapoor | Perlmutter |
| Courtney | Katko | Peters |
| Craig | Keatinge | Phillips |
| Crenshaw | Kelly (IL) | Pingree |
| Crist | Khanna | Pocan |
| Crow | Kildee | Porter |
| Cuellar | Kilmer | Pressley |
| Curtis | Kim (CA) | Price (NC) |
| Davids (KS) | Kim (NJ) | Quigley |
| Davis, Danny K. | Kind | Raskin |
| Davis, Rodney | Kinzinger | Reed |
| Dean | Kirkpatrick | Rice (NY) |
| DeFazio | Krishnamoorthi | Richmond |
| DeGette | Kuster | Rodgers (WA) |
| DeLauro | LaHood | Ross |
| DeBene | Lamb | Roy |
| Delgado | Langevin | Roybal-Allard |
| Demings | Larsen (WA) | Ruiz |
| DeSaulnier | Larson (CT) | Ruppersberger |
| Deutch | Latta | Rush |
| Dingell | Lawrence | Ryan |
| Dorgan | Lawson (FL) | Sanchez |
| Doyle, Michael | Lee (CA) | Sarbanes |
| F. | Lee (NY) | Scanlon |
| Emmer | Leges Fernandez | Schakowsky |
| Escobar | Levin (CA) | Schiff |
| Eshoo | Levin (MI) | Schneider |

NOT VOTING—11

| | | |
|-----------|--------------|-------|
| Bilbrakis | Hastings | Steel |
| Brady | Joyce (OH) | Tlaib |
| Bucks | LaTurner | Trone |
| Granger | Scott, David | |

□ 0308

Ms. CLARKE of New York changed her vote from "yea" to "nay."

So the objection was not agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER. The Clerk will now notify the Senate of the action of the House, informing that body that the House is now ready to proceed in joint session with the further counting of the electoral vote for the President and Vice President.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Secretary of the Senate shall inform the House of Representatives that the Senate is ready to proceed in joint session with the further counting of the electoral votes for President and Vice President.

(By unanimous consent, Mr. HOYER was allowed to speak out of order.)

HONORING SHUWANZA GOFF

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, this would not be the time I would have chosen, but it may be the last time that we are in session before the new administration comes in.

We are losing an extraordinary young woman who has been with me for over a decade and who is our floor leader, our floor director. All of you know her. Her name is Shuwanza Goff, and she has been with me for a significant period of time.

Shuwanza is a wonderful person. And the problem with having wonderful, talented, good staff is that at an administration change, they steal your people. It is just a terrible thing that happens. Two of my staff, Shuwanza Goff and Mariel Saez, will be going to the administration as well, and I have asked the administration to please do not take any more of my people.

But Shuwanza Goff has just been extraordinary. Those of you who have dealt with her understand how bright she is.

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That is the bad news, Madam Speaker, that they have taken her. But the good news is, she is going to be the administration's representative to the House of Representatives, so we are going to see a lot of Shuwanza. I am sure she will be talking to both of us on both sides of the aisle and urging us to vote one way or the other or getting us information or doing all sorts of things that we might ask her to do and that she would want to do for us.

I want to say, Madam Speaker, and I know you share my view, those of us who have had an opportunity to work closely with Shuwanza. I love Shuwanza Goff. She is just a wonderful spirit. She is smart. She knows the rules. She knows the floor. I think Mr. MCCARTHY's and Mr. SCALISE's staffs would say the same thing if I had given them any notice that we were going to do this, but I thought we had some time.

Shuwanza, I really do want to thank you, and we wish you the best of luck. We know you are not going far. I know we are going to see a lot of you, but we wish you great success in everything you do.

I tell my staff, Madam Speaker, that they can go off the payroll, but they cannot go off the staff.

God bless, Shuwanza, and good luck.

□ 0322

At 3:22 a.m., the Sergeant at Arms, Paul D. Irving, announced the Vice President and the Senate of the United States.

The Senate entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, headed by the Vice President and the Secretary of the Senate, the Members and officers of the House rising to receive them.

The Vice President took his seat as the Presiding Officer of the joint convention of the two Houses, the Speaker of the House occupying the chair on his left. Senators took seats to the right of the rostrum as prescribed by law.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The joint session of Congress to count the electoral vote will resume. The tellers will take their chairs.

The two Houses retired to consider separately and decide upon the vote of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to which an objection has been filed.

The Secretary of the Senate will report the action of the Senate.

The Secretary of the Senate read the order of the Senate, as follows:

Ordered, That the Senate by a vote of 7 ayes to 92 nays rejects the objection to the electoral votes cast in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for Joseph R. Biden, Jr., for President and KAMALA D. HARRIS for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Clerk of the House will report the action of the House.

The Clerk of the House read the order of the House, as follows:

Ordered, That the House of Representatives rejects the objection to the electoral vote of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Pursuant to the law, chapter 1 of title 3, United

States Code, because the two Houses have not sustained the objection, the original certificate submitted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will be counted as provided therein.

The tellers will now record and announce the vote of the State of Rhode Island for President and Vice President in accordance with the action of the two Houses.

This certificate from Rhode Island, the Parliamentarian has advised me, is the only certificate of vote from that State that purports to be a return from the State and that has annexed to it a certificate from an authority of that State purporting to appoint and ascertain electors.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of Rhode Island seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Joseph R. Biden, Jr., of the State of Delaware received 4 votes for President and KAMALA D. HARRIS of the State of California received 4 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting the certificate of vote of the State of Rhode Island that the teller has verified appears to be regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Hearing none, this certificate from South Carolina, the Parliamentarian has advised me, is the only certificate of vote from that State that purports to be a return from the State and that has annexed to it a certificate from an authority of that State purporting to appoint and ascertain electors.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of South Carolina seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Donald J. Trump of the State of Florida received 9 votes for President and MICHAEL R. PENCE of the State of Indiana received 9 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting the certificate of vote of the State of South Carolina that the teller has verified appears to be regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Hearing none, this certificate from South Dakota, the Parliamentarian has advised me, is the only certificate of vote from that State that purports to be a return from the State and that has annexed to it a certificate from an authority of that State purporting to appoint and ascertain electors.

Senator BLUNT. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of South Dakota seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Donald J. Trump of the State of Florida received 3 votes for President and MICHAEL R. PENCE of the State of Indiana received 3 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting the certificate of vote of the State of South Dakota that the teller has verified appears to be regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

□ 0330

The VICE PRESIDENT. This certificate from Tennessee, the Parliamentarian has advised me, is the only certificate of electoral vote from the State that purports to be a return from the State and that has annexed to it a certificate of an authority of that State purporting to appoint or ascertain electors.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of Tennessee seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Donald J. Trump of the State of Florida received 11 votes for President and MICHAEL R. PENCE of the State of Indiana received 11 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting the certificate of the vote of the State of Tennessee that the teller has verified as regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Hearing none, this certificate from Texas, the Parliamentarian has advised me, is the only certificate of vote from the State that purports to be a return from the State and that has annexed to it a certificate of an authority of that State that purports to appoint or ascertain electors.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of Texas seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Donald J. Trump of the State of Florida received 38 votes for President and MICHAEL R. PENCE of the State of Indiana received 38 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting the certificate of the vote of the State of Texas that the teller has verified appears to be regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Hearing none, this certificate from Utah, the Parliamentarian has advised me, is the only certificate of vote from that State that purports to be a return from the State and that has annexed to it a certificate of an authority from the State purporting to appoint or ascertain electors.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of ILLINOIS. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of Utah seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Donald J. Trump of the State of Florida received 6 votes for President and MICHAEL R. PENCE of the State of Indiana received 6 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting the certificate of the vote of the State of Utah

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that the teller has verified to be regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Hearing none, this certificate from Vermont, the Parliamentarian has advised me, is the only certificate of vote from the State that purports to be a return from the State and that has annexed to it a certificate of an authority from that State purporting to appoint or ascertain electors.

Senator BLUNT. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of Vermont seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Joseph R. Biden, Jr., of the State of Delaware received 3 votes for President and KAMALA D. HARRIS of the State of California received 3 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting the certificate of the vote of the State of Vermont that the teller has verified as regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Hearing none, this certificate from the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Parliamentarian has advised, is the only certificate of vote from that State that purports to be a return from the State and that has annexed to it a certificate of an authority from that same State purporting to appoint or ascertain electors.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the Commonwealth of Virginia seems to be in regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Joseph R. Biden, Jr., of the State of Delaware received 13 votes for President and KAMALA D. HARRIS of the State of California received 13 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting the certificate of the vote of the Commonwealth of Virginia that the teller has verified as appearing regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Hearing none, this certificate from Washington, the Parliamentarian has advised, is the only certificate of vote from that State that purports to be a return from the State and that has a certificate of an authority from the same State purporting to appoint or ascertain electors.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of Washington seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Joseph R. Biden, Jr., of the State of Delaware received 12 votes for President and KAMALA D. HARRIS of the State of California received 12 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting the certificate of the vote of the State of Washington that the teller has verified and appears to be regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Hearing none, this certificate from West Virginia, the Parliamentarian has advised, is the only certificate of vote from that State that purports to be a return from the State and that has annexed to it a certificate of an authority from the State purporting to appoint or ascertain electors.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of ILLINOIS. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of West Virginia seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Donald J. Trump of the State of Florida received 5 votes for President and MICHAEL R. PENCE of the State of Indiana received 5 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting the certificate of the vote for the State of West Virginia that the teller has verified appears to be regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Hearing none, this certificate from Wisconsin, the Parliamentarian has advised, is the only certificate from that State that purports to be a return from the State and that has annexed to it a certificate of an authority from the State purporting to appoint or ascertain electors.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of Wisconsin seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Joseph R. Biden, Jr., of the State of Delaware received 10 votes for President and KAMALA D. HARRIS of the State of California received 10 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. For what purpose does the gentleman from Texas rise?

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. President, I object to the electoral votes of the State of Wisconsin because 71 House Members, all of who condemn violence as we witnessed today, are firmly committed to the resolution of disagreements in civil, lawful, peaceful institutions with full and fair debate, free of violence. And though not a single court has allowed an evidentiary hearing to listen to the significant body of evidence of fraud, and though some seize on the court's failure to misrepresent that no court would listen to the evidence as saying evidence did not exist; while Democrat leaders in Milwaukee illegally and unconstitutionally created more than 200 illegal polling places; tens of thousands of votes were changed by workers, despite election workers' objections, plus so many other illegalities to fraudulently create a 20,000-vote lead, we object, along with a Senator who now has withdrawn his objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Sections 15 and 17 of title 3 of the United States Code require that any objection be presented in writing, signed by a Member of the House of Representatives and a Senator.

Is the objection in writing and signed by a Member and a Senator?

Mr. GOHMERT. It is in writing. It is signed by a Member, but it is not signed and objected to by a Senator, Mr. President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. In that case, the objection cannot be entertained.

This certificate from Wyoming, the Parliamentarian has advised, is the only certificate of vote from that State and purports to be a return from the State and has annexed to it the certificate of an authority from the same State purporting to appoint or ascertain electors.

Senator BLUNT. Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the State of Wyoming seems to be regular in form and authentic, and it appears therefrom that Donald J. Trump of the State of Florida received 3 votes for President and MICHAEL R. PENCE of the State of Indiana received 3 votes for Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any objections to counting a certificate of the vote of the State of Wyoming that the teller has verified appears to be regular in form and authentic?

There was no objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Hearing none, the Chair advises Members of Congress the certificates having been read, the tellers will ascertain and deliver the result to the President of the Senate.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. The undersigned, ROY BLUNT and AMY KLOBUCHAR, tellers on the part of the Senate; ZOE LOFGREN and RODNEY DAVIS, tellers on the part of the House of Representatives, report the following as the result of the ascertainment and counting of the electoral votes for President and Vice President of the United States for the term beginning on the 20th day of January, 2021. The report we make is that Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS will be the President and the Vice President, according to the ballots that have been given to us.

The tellers delivered to the President of the Senate the following statement of results:

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS FOR THE COUNTING OF THE ELECTORAL VOTES FOR PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICIAL TALLY

The undersigned, ROY BLUNT and AMY KLOBUCHAR tellers on the part of the Senate, ZOE LOFGREN and RODNEY DAVIS tellers on the part of the House of Representatives, report the following as the result of the ascertainment and counting of the electoral vote for President and Vice President of the United States for the term beginning on the twentieth day of January, two thousand and twenty one.

| Electoral votes of each State | For President | | For Vice President | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| | Joseph R. Biden, Jr. | Donald J. Trump | Kamala D. Harris | Michael R. Pence |
| Alabama—9 | | 9 | | 9 |
| Alaska—3 | | 3 | | 3 |
| Arizona—11 | 11 | | 11 | |
| Arkansas—6 | | 6 | | 6 |

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| Electoral votes of each State | For President | | For Vice President | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| | Joseph R. Biden, Jr. | Donald J. Trump | Kamala D. Harris | Michael R. Pence |
| California—55 | 55 | | 55 | |
| Colorado—9 | 9 | | 9 | |
| Connecticut—7 | 7 | | 7 | |
| Delaware—3 | 3 | | 3 | |
| District of Columbia—3 | 3 | | 3 | |
| Florida—29 | | 29 | | 29 |
| Georgia—16 | 16 | | 16 | |
| Hawaii—4 | 4 | | 4 | |
| Idaho—4 | | 4 | | 4 |
| Illinois—20 | 20 | | 20 | |
| Indiana—11 | | 11 | | 11 |
| Iowa—6 | | 6 | | 6 |
| Kansas—6 | | 6 | | 6 |
| Kentucky—8 | | 8 | | 8 |
| Louisiana—8 | | 8 | | 8 |
| Maine—4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Maryland—10 | 10 | | 10 | |
| Massachusetts—11 | 11 | | 11 | |
| Michigan—16 | 16 | | 16 | |
| Minnesota—10 | 10 | | 10 | |
| Mississippi—6 | | 6 | | 6 |
| Missouri—10 | | 10 | | 10 |
| Montana—3 | | 3 | | 3 |
| Nebraska—5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| Nevada—6 | 6 | | 6 | |
| New Hampshire—4 | 4 | | 4 | |
| New Jersey—14 | 14 | | 14 | |
| New Mexico—5 | 5 | | 5 | |
| New York—29 | 29 | | 29 | |
| North Carolina—15 | | 15 | | 15 |
| North Dakota—3 | | 3 | | 3 |
| Ohio—18 | | 18 | | 18 |
| Oklahoma—7 | | 7 | | 7 |
| Oregon—7 | 7 | | 7 | |
| Pennsylvania—20 | 20 | | 20 | |
| Rhode Island—4 | 4 | | 4 | |
| South Carolina—9 | | 9 | | 9 |
| South Dakota—3 | | 3 | | 3 |
| Tennessee—11 | | 11 | | 11 |
| Texas—38 | | 38 | | 38 |
| Utah—6 | | 6 | | 6 |
| Vermont—3 | 3 | | 3 | |
| Virginia—13 | 13 | | 13 | |
| Washington—12 | 12 | | 12 | |
| West Virginia—5 | | 5 | | 5 |
| Wisconsin—10 | 10 | | 10 | |
| Wyoming—3 | | 3 | | 3 |
| Total—538 | 306 | 232 | 306 | 232 |

ROY BLUNT,

AMY KLOBUCHAR,

Tellers on the part of the Senate.

ZOE LOFGREN,

RODNEY DAVIS,

Tellers on the part of the House of Representatives.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The state of the vote for President of the United States, as delivered to the President of the Senate, is as follows:

The whole number of the electors appointed to vote for President of the United States is 538, of which a majority is 270.

Joseph R. Biden, Jr., of the state of Delaware, has received for President of the United States 306 votes;

Donald J. Trump, of the state of Florida, has received 232 votes;

The state of the vote for Vice President of the United States, as delivered to the President of the Senate, is as follows:

The whole number of the electors appointed to vote for Vice President of the United States is 538, of which a majority is 270.

KAMALA D. HARRIS, of the state of California, has received for Vice President of the United States 306 votes;

MICHAEL R. PENCE, of the state of Indiana, has received 232 votes.

This announcement of the state of the vote by the President of the Senate shall be deemed a sufficient declaration of the persons elected President and Vice President of the United States, each for the term beginning on the twentieth day of January, two

thousand and twenty one, and shall be entered, together with the list of the votes, on the Journals of the Senate and House of Representatives.

□ 0340

The VICE PRESIDENT. The whole number of electors appointed to vote for President of the United States is 538. Within that whole number, a majority is 270.

The votes for President of the United States are as follows:

Joseph R. Biden, Jr., of the State of Delaware has received 306 votes.

Donald J. Trump of the State of Florida has received 232 votes.

The whole number of electors appointed to vote for Vice President of the United States is 538. Within that whole number, a majority is 270.

The votes for Vice President of the United States are as follows:

KAMALA D. HARRIS of the State of California has received 306 votes.

Michael R. Pence of the State of Indiana has received 232 votes.

This announcement of the state of the vote by the President of the Senate shall be deemed a sufficient declaration of the persons elected President and Vice President of the United States, each for the term beginning on the 20th day of January, 2021, and shall be entered, together with the list of the votes, on the Journals of the Senate and House of Representatives.

The Chair now recognizes for the purpose of a closing prayer the 62nd Chaplain of the United States Senate, Chaplain Barry C. Black.

Chaplain BLACK. Lord of our lives and sovereign of our beloved Nation, we deplore the desecration of the United States Capitol Building, the shedding of innocent blood, the loss of life, and the quagmire of dysfunction that threaten our democracy.

These tragedies have reminded us that words matter and that the power of life and death is in the tongue. We have been warned that eternal vigilance continues to be freedom's price.

Lord, You have helped us remember that we need to see in each other a common humanity that reflects Your image. You have strengthened our resolve to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies domestic, as well as foreign.

Use us to bring healing and unity to a hurting and divided Nation and world. Thank You for what You have blessed our lawmakers to accomplish in spite of threats to liberty.

Bless and keep us. Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to do Your will, and guide our feet on the path of peace. And God bless America. We pray in Your sovereign name. Amen.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The purpose of the joint session having concluded, pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution 1, 117th Congress, the Chair declares the joint session dissolved.

(Thereupon, at 3 o'clock and 44 minutes a.m., the joint session of the two Houses of Congress was dissolved.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON LEE). Pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution 1, the electoral vote will be spread at large upon the Journal.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 5(a)(1)(B) of House Resolution 8, the House stands adjourned until 11 a.m. on Monday, January 11, 2021.

Thereupon (at 3 o'clock and 48 minutes a.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, January 11, 2021, at 11 a.m.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. CLOUD (for himself, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. PALMER, Mr. RUTHERFORD, and Mr. BAIRD):

H.R. 217. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enforce the licensure requirement for medical providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PFLUGER (for himself, Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mrs. BICE of Oklahoma, Mr. JACKSON, Ms. HERRELL, Mr. BAHN, Mr. ROY, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. FALLON, and Mr. ARRINGTON):

H.R. 218. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture from issuing moratoriums on issuing new oil and gas leases and drill permits on certain Federal lands; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DOGGETT:

H.R. 219. A bill to amend the Trade Act of 1974 to exclude from eligibility for the generalized system of preferences any country that fails to effectively enforce its environmental laws or meet its international environmental obligations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. EMMER (for himself and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois):

H.R. 220. A bill to make supplemental appropriations to carry out farm stress programs, provide for expedited additional support under the farm and ranch stress assistance network, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. ESHOO:

H.R. 221. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to modify the oath of office taken by individuals in the civil service or uniformed services, and of other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Ms. ESHOO (for herself and Mr. McEACHIN):

H.R. 222. A bill to treat the Tuesday next after the first Monday in November in the same manner as any legal public holiday for purposes of Federal employment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. ESPAILLAT (for himself and Mr. SIKES):

H.R. 223. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to reimburse

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qualified health care providers for the costs of purchasing, leasing, installing, and operating qualified equipment for cold storage of COVID-19 vaccines; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. GARCIA of Texas (for herself, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. BABIN, Mr. VELA, Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. ROY, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, and Mr. GREEN of Texas):

H.R. 224. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5302 Galveston Road in Houston, Texas, as the "Vanessa Guillen Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 225. A bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to more comprehensively address the interstate transportation of firearms or ammunition; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 226. A bill to direct the United States Postal Service to designate a single, unique ZIP Code for Fairlawn, Virginia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. HASTINGS (for himself and Mrs. HAYES):

H.R. 227. A bill to provide dedicated funding for the national infrastructure investment program and the capital investment grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LAMALFA:

H.R. 228. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2141 Ferry Street in Anderson, California, as the "Norma Connick Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 229. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to prohibit a candidate for election for Federal office from using amounts contributed to the candidate's campaign to make payments to vendors owned or controlled by the candidate or by an immediate family member of the candidate; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 230. A bill to prohibit the use of funds provided for the official travel expenses of Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the legislative branch for airline accommodations which are not coach-class accommodations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 231. A bill to prevent the enrichment of certain Government officers and employees or their families through Federal funds or contracting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 232. A bill to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to require the President, Vice President, and Cabinet-level officers to release their tax returns, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. STEIL (for himself and Ms. DEANE):

H.R. 233. A bill to amend the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to include fi-

nancial criminal activities associated with the facilitation of severe forms of trafficking in persons within the factors considered as indicia of serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 234. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to treat certain individuals who served in Vietnam as a member of the armed forces of the Republic of Korea as a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States for purposes of the provision of health care by the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ (for herself, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. MENG, Mr. NADLER, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. JEFFRIES, Miss RICE of New York, and Mr. SUOZZI):

H.R. 235. A bill to authorize additional monies to the Public Housing Capital Fund of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. DOGGETT (for himself and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey):

H. Res. 20. A resolution expressing support for the goals and ideals of "National Hydrocephalus Awareness Month"; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. CLOUD:

H.R. 217.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 17

"To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof."

By Mr. PFLUGER:

H.R. 218.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. DOGGETT:

H.R. 219.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States of America, The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. EMMER:

H.R. 220.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. ESHOO:

H.R. 221.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 of article VI of the Constitution. In *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 17 U.S. 316 (1819), the Supreme Court stated, "Yet he would be charged with insanity who should contend that the legislature might not

superadd to the oath directed by the Constitution such other oath of office as its wisdom might suggest."

By Ms. ESHOO:

H.R. 222.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution

By Mr. ESPAILLAT:

H.R. 223.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article One of the United States Constitution, section 8, clause 18:

The Congress shall have Power—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof

By Ms. GARCIA of Texas:

H.R. 224.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 7: [The Congress shall have Power . . .] To establish Post Offices and post Roads

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 225.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 226.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 7 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. HASTINGS:

H.R. 227.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. LAMALFA:

H.R. 228.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 229.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution, to provide for the general welfare and make all laws necessary and proper to carry out the powers of Congress.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 230.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution, to provide for the general welfare and make all laws necessary and proper to carry out the powers of Congress.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 231.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution, to provide for the general welfare and make all laws necessary and proper to carry out the powers of Congress.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 232.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution, to provide for the general welfare and make all laws necessary and proper to carry out the powers of Congress.

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By Mr. STEIL:

H.R. 233.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 234.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 235.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The Congress shall have Power to . . . provide for the . . . general Welfare of the United States; . . .

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 24: Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 28: Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. BANKS, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. COLE, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mrs. HINSON, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. LATTA, Mr. MCHENRY, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. PFLUGER, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. WRIGHT, and Mr. STAUBER.

H.R. 40: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. TORRES of New York, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 51: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 82: Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 97: Ms. WILD, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. EVANS, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LIEU, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. ESCOBAR, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. BASS, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. TRONE, Mr. RUSH, Mr. POCAN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. TONKO, Ms. SCANLON, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MENG, Mr. COOPER, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. TRAHAN, Ms. CHU, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. BEYER, Mr. MALINOWSKI, Ms. DEAN, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. LEVIN of Michigan.

H.R. 173: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. SUOZZI, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. GARCIA of Texas.

H.J. Res. 12: Mr. HERN, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. WRIGHT, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. DONALDS, Mr. BURCHETT, and Mrs. WAGNER.



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No. 4

Senate

The Senate met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, have compassion on us with Your unfailing love. As our lawmakers prepare to formally certify the votes cast by the electoral college, be present with them. Guide our legislators with Your wisdom and truth as they seek to meet the requirements of the U.S. Constitution. Lord, inspire them to seize this opportunity to demonstrate to the Nation and world how the democratic process can be done properly and in an orderly manner. Help them to remember that history is a faithful stenographer, and so are You.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following letter from the Secretary of the Senate, which was ordered to lie on the table:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On Tuesday, January 5, 2021, the President of the United States sent by messenger the attached sealed envelope addressed to the President of the Senate dated January 5, 2021, said to contain a message regarding additional steps addressing the threat posed by applications and other software developed or controlled by Chinese companies. The Senate not being in session on the day which the President delivered this message, I accepted the message at 5:00 p.m., and I now present to you the President's message, with the accompanying papers, for disposition by the Senate.

Respectfully,

JULIE A. ADAMS,
Secretary of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 11

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 11) to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces.

Mr. GRASSLEY. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to its further reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 13

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 13) to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on improvements to the security, integrity, and administration of Federal elections.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

JOINT SESSION OF THE TWO HOUSES—COUNTING OF ELECTORAL BALLOTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of S. Con. Res. 1, the Senate will now proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the counting of the electoral ballots.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:51 p.m., preceded by the Secretary of the Senate, Julie E. Adams, and the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Jennifer Hemingway, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the purpose of counting electoral ballots.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Pursuant to S. Con. Res. 1 and section 17, title III, U.S. Code, when the two Houses withdraw from the joint session to count the electoral vote for separate consideration of an objection, a Senator may speak to the objection for 5 minutes and not more than once. Debate shall not exceed 2 hours, after which the Chair will put the question: Shall the objection be sustained?

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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The clerk will report the objection made in the joint session.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Objection from Representative GOSAR from Arizona and Senator CRUZ and others, "We, a Member of the House of Representatives and a United States Senator, object to the counting of the electoral votes of the State of Arizona on the ground that they were not, under all of the known circumstances, regularly given."

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader and the Democratic leader be allowed to speak and that following their remarks, the majority leader and the Democratic leader each control up to 1 hour of debate time and be authorized to yield up to 5 minutes of that time to any Senator seeking recognition. Further, I ask unanimous consent that the Senators be permitted to insert statements into the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

CHALLENGE TO THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we are debating a step that has never been taken in American history: whether Congress should overrule the voters and overturn a Presidential election.

I have served 36 years in the Senate. This will be the most important vote I have ever cast.

President Trump claims the election was stolen. The assertions range from specific local allegations, to constitutional arguments, to sweeping conspiracy theories. I supported the President's right to use the legal system. Dozens of lawsuits received hearings in courtrooms all across our country, but over and over, courts rejected these claims, including all-star judges whom the President himself nominated.

Every election, we know, features some illegality and irregularity, and, of course, that is unacceptable.

I support strong State-led voting reforms. Last year's bizarre pandemic procedures must not become the new norm. But, my colleagues, nothing before us proves illegality anywhere near the massive scale—the massive scale that would have tipped the entire election, nor can public doubt alone justify a radical break when the doubt itself was incited without any evidence.

The Constitution gives us here in Congress a limited role. We cannot simply declare ourselves a national

board of elections on steroids. The voters, the courts, and the States have all spoken. They have all spoken. If we overrule them, it would damage our Republic forever.

This election actually was not unusually close. Just in recent history, 1976, 2000, and 2004 were all closer than this one. The electoral college margin is almost identical to what it was in 2016. If this election were overturned by mere allegations from the losing side, our democracy would enter a death spiral. We would never see the whole Nation accept an election again. Every 4 years would be a scramble for power at any cost. The electoral college, which most of us on this side have been defending for years, would cease to exist, leaving many of our States with no real say at all in choosing a President.

The effects would go even beyond the elections themselves. Self-government, my colleagues, requires a shared commitment to the truth and a shared respect for the ground rules of our system. We cannot keep drifting apart into two separate tribes with a separate set of facts and separate realities with nothing in common except our hostility toward each other and mistrust for the few national institutions that we all still share.

Every time—every time in the last 30 years that Democrats have lost a Presidential race, they have tried a challenge just like this—after 2000, after 2004, and after 2016. After 2004, a Senator joined and forced the same debate. And, believe it or not, Democrats like Harry Reid, DICK DURBIN, and Hillary Clinton praised—praised and applauded the stunt. Republicans condemned those baseless efforts back then, and we just spent 4 years condemning Democrats' shameful attacks on the validity of President Trump's own election. So there can be no double standard. The media that is outraged today spent 4 years aiding and abetting the Democrats' attacks on our institutions after they lost.

But we must not imitate and escalate what we repudiate. Our duty is to govern for the public good. The United States Senate has a higher calling than an endless spiral of partisan vengeance.

Congress will either overrule the voters, the States, and the courts for the first time ever or honor the people's decision. We will either guarantee Democrats' delegitimizing efforts after 2016 became a permanent new routine for both sides or declare that our Nation deserves a lot better than this. We will either hasten down a poisonous path where only the winners of elections actually accept the results or show we can still muster the patriotic courage that our forebears showed not only in victory but in defeat.

The Framers built the Senate to stop short-term passions from boiling over and melting the foundations of our Republic. So I believe protecting our constitutional order requires respecting the limits of our own power. It would be unfair and wrong to disenfranchise

American voters and overrule the courts and the States on this extraordinarily thin basis, and I will not pretend such a vote would be a harmless protest gesture while relying on others to do the right thing. I will vote to respect the people's decision and defend our system of government as we know it.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CHALLENGE TO THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Vice President, as prescribed by the Constitution and the laws of the Nation, the purpose of this joint session is for tellers, appointed on a bipartisan basis by the two Houses, to read to the Congress the results of an election that has already happened. We are here to receive an announcement of a vote that has already been certified by every State in the Union and confirmed by the courts many times—many times over. We are here to watch the current Vice President open envelopes and receive the news of a verdict that has already been rendered. It is a solemn and august occasion, no doubt, but it is a formality.

The Congress does not determine the outcome of elections; the people do. The Congress is not endowed with the power to administer elections; our States are given that power.

By the end of the proceedings today, there will be confirmed once again something that is well known and well settled: The American people elected Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS to be the next President and Vice President of the United States. Yet a number of our colleagues have organized an effort to undermine and object to that free and fair election. They are in the minority. They will lose; they know that. They have no evidence of widespread voter fraud upon which to base their objections. That is because there is none. There is none, not brought before any of the courts successfully.

They know that President Trump and his allies have suffered a defeat in court after court across the country, losing no fewer than 62 legal challenges. And, I might add, many Republican-appointed judges—some appointed by President Trump—rendered those decisions.

They know—you all know—that Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS are going to be sworn in as President and Vice President of the United States on January 20, but they are going to object to the counting of the vote anyway, and in the process, they will embarrass themselves, they will embarrass their party, and worst of all, they will embarrass their country.

This insurrection was fortunately discouraged by the leadership of the majority party, but it was not quelled.

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It is a very sad comment on our times that merely accepting the results of an election is considered an act of political courage. Sadder and more dangerous still is the fact that an element of the Republican Party believes their political viability hinges on the endorsement of an attempted coup, that anyone—much less an elected official—would be willing to tarnish our democracy in order to burnish their personal political fortunes.

Over the course of the afternoon and however far into the evening this band of Republic objectors wants to take us, Senators of good will from both sides of the aisle will explain why these challenges must be dismissed. The Senators from States whose electoral votes are being challenged will explain how the allegations of fraud are baseless. And a substantial bipartisan majority must vote to put down these objections and defend the sanctity of our elections and indeed—and indeed—our great and grand democracy because that is what we are talking about today: the health of power democracy, this wonderful, beautiful, grand democracy where the peaceful passing of the torch is extolled by schoolchildren in the second grade but not by some here.

As we speak, half of our voters are being conditioned by the outgoing President to believe that when his party loses an election, the results must not be legitimate.

As we speak, the eyes of the world are on this Chamber, questioning whether America is still the shining example of democracy, the shining city on the Hill.

What message will we send today to our people, to the world that has so looked up to us for centuries? What message will we send to fledgling democracies who study our Constitution, mirror our laws and traditions in the hopes that they, too, can build a country ruled by the consent of the governed?

What message will we send to those countries where democratic values are under assault and look to us to see if those values are still worth fighting for?

What message will we send to every dark corner of the world where human rights are betrayed, elections are stolen, human dignity denied?

What will we show those people? Will we show those people that there is a better way to ensure liberty and opportunity of humankind?

Sadly, a small band of Republican objectors may darken the view of our democracy today, but a larger group of Senators and House Members from both sides of the aisle can send a message, too: that democracy beats deep in the hearts of our citizens and our elected representatives; that we are a country of laws and of not men; that our traditions are not so easily discarded, even by our President; that facts matter; that truth matters; that while democracy allows free speech and free expression, even if that expression is

antidemocratic, there will always, always be—praise God—a far broader and stronger coalition ready to push back and defend everything we hold dear.

We can send that message today by voting in large and overwhelming numbers to defeat these objections. My colleagues, we each swore an oath just 3 days ago that we would defend and support the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that we would bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

We swore that we took this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that we could well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office we were about to enter, so help us God.

The precise words of that oath were shortly written after the Civil War, when the idea of true faith and allegiance to this country and its Constitution took on enormous meaning. Let those words ring in the ears of every Senator today. Let us do our duty to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, so help us God.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Texas, Senator CRUZ.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, we gather together at a moment of great division, at a moment of great passion. We have seen and, no doubt, will continue to see a great deal of moralizing from both sides of the aisle, but I would urge to both sides perhaps a bit less certitude and a bit more recognition that we are gathered at a time when democracy is in crisis.

Recent polling shows that 39 percent of Americans believe the election that just occurred “was rigged.” You may not agree with that assessment, but it is, nonetheless, a reality for nearly half the country.

I would note it is not just Republicans who believe that. Thirty-one percent of Independents agree with that statement. Seventeen percent of Democrats believe the election was rigged. Even if you do not share that conviction, it is the responsibility, I believe, of this office to acknowledge that is a profound threat to this country and to the legitimacy of any administrations that will come in the future.

I want to take a moment to speak to my Democratic colleagues. I understand. Your guy is winning right now. If Democrats vote as a bloc, Joe Biden will almost certainly be certified as the next President of the United States.

I want to speak to the Republicans who are considering voting against these objections. I understand your concerns, but I urge you to pause and think: What does it say to the nearly half the country that believes this election was rigged if we vote not even to

consider the claims of illegality and fraud in this election?

And I believe there is a better way. The leaders just spoke about setting aside the election. Let me be clear. I am not arguing for setting aside the result of this election. All of us are faced with two choices, both of which are lousy. One choice is vote against the objection, and tens of millions of Americans will see a vote against the objection as a statement that voter fraud doesn't matter, isn't real, and shouldn't be taken seriously. And a great many of us don't believe that.

On the other hand, most, if not all, of us believe we should not set aside the results of an election just because our candidate may not have prevailed. So I endeavored to look for door No. 3, a third option, and for that I looked to history, to the precedent of the 1876 election, the Hayes-Tilden election, where this Congress appointed an electoral commission to examine claims of voter fraud.

Five House Members, five Senators, five Supreme Court Justices examined the evidence and rendered a judgment. What I would urge of this body is that we do the same: that we appoint an electoral commission to conduct a 10-day emergency audit, consider the evidence, and resolve the claims.

For those in the Democratic aisle who say there is no evidence, they have been rejected, then you should rest in comfort. If that is the case, an electoral commission would reject those claims.

But for those who respect the voters, simply telling the voters, “Go jump in a lake: the fact that you have deep concerns is of no moment to us,” that jeopardizes, I believe, the legitimacy of this and subsequent elections.

The Constitution gives to Congress the responsibility this day to count the votes. The Framers knew what they were doing when they gave responsibilities to Congress. We have a responsibility, and I would urge that we follow the precedent of 1877. The Electoral Count Act explicitly allows objections such as this one for votes that were not regularly given.

Let me be clear. This objection is for the State of Arizona, but it is broader than that. It is an objection for all six of the contested States to have a credible, objective, impartial body hear the evidence and make a conclusive determination. That would benefit both sides. That would improve the legitimacy of this election.

So let me urge my colleagues: All of us take our responsibility seriously. I would urge my colleagues: Don't take, perhaps, the easy path, but, instead, act together. Astonish the viewers and act in a bipartisan sense to say we will have a credible and fair tribunal, consider the claims, consider the facts, consider the evidence, and make a conclusive determination whether and to what extent this election complied with the Constitution and with Federal law.

Mr. SCHUMER, Senator KLOBUCHAR, The VICE PRESIDENT, The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. President, I first would like to say I appreciate the words of our leader, Senator SCHUMER, as well as Senator MCCONNELL's call for a higher calling.

January 6 is not typically a day of historical significance for our country. For centuries, this day is simply the day that we receive each State's certified electoral votes, and it has come and gone without much fanfare.

In fact, this is only the third time in 120 years that the Senate has gathered to debate an objection, and as Senator CRUZ well knows, both times these objections were resoundingly defeated. The last time the vote was 74 to 1.

Why? Because Senators have long believed that they should not mess around with the will of the people. They have understood the words of our great former colleague John McCain from the State of Arizona, who once said that nothing in life is more liberating than to fight for a cause larger than yourself.

In this case, my colleagues, our cause, despite our political differences, is to preserve our American democracy, to preserve our Republic because, as someone once said long ago, it is a republic if you can keep it.

Now, I appreciate all my Democratic and Republican colleagues who have joined our ranks of coup fighters, who have stood up for our democracy, who stand tall for our Republic, and who believe in an ideal greater than ourselves, larger than our political parties. That ideal is America.

And Senator CRUZ, he knows this: On January 20, Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS will be sworn in as President and Vice President of the United States. He knows that President-Elect Biden won more votes than any President in history and more than 7 million more votes than President Trump.

Despite the unfounded conspiracy theories Senator CRUZ tells, he knows that high-ranking officials in President Trump's own Homeland Security Department have concluded that the 2020 election was "the most secure in American history."

If he wants to improve the numbers in his own party that he just mentioned of people believing in our elections, maybe he should start consulting with them or maybe he should start consulting with former Attorney General Barr, who said that he has found no evidence of widespread fraud in the 2020 election.

We don't have to go back to 1877, my colleagues. Senator CRUZ knows that 80 judges, including conservative judges, including judges confirmed in this Chamber, nominated by President Trump, have thrown out these lawsuits, calling them baseless, inadequate, and contrary both to the plain meaning of the constitutional text and common sense.

And he knows that all 10 living Defense Secretaries, including both of

Trump's Defense Secretaries—Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, William Cohen—he knows that all of these leaders have come together to say that these scurrilous attacks on our democracy must stop and we must allow for a peaceful transition of power.

Senator SINEMA will fill you in on the specific facts as to why this election was sound and true in Arizona, but a summary: President Trump received 1,661,686 votes in the State; President-Elect Biden won 1,672,143 votes, meaning that he won the State by 10,457 votes.

On November 30, after Arizona's Republican Governor, the secretary of state, the attorney general, and the conservative chief justice of the Arizona Supreme Court certified the results of the election, the Governor actually said:

We do elections well here in Arizona. The system is strong.

Eight postelection lawsuits brought in Arizona to challenge the results were dismissed by judges. Nine Members of the House from Arizona were elected in the same election, including four Republicans. Colleagues, I did not see Senator CRUZ over at the swearing-in at the House of Representatives last Sunday asking for an audit. He did not stop their swearing-in because there was no fraud, and he did not ask for an audit because we had a fair election.

I will end with this. My friend ROY BLUNT, my fellow Rules Committee leader, many years ago found a statue, a bust of a man at the top of a bookcase. He did research. He went to the historians. All he could find out was that no one knew who this guy was except that he was a cleric. Hence, the statue is called "The Unknown Cleric."

Now, at the time, our leaders thought this man important enough that they would warrant a statue for him, but today no one knows who he is. Senator BLUNT's message to schoolkids and Senators alike that visit his office, when he shows them the statue: What we do here is more important than who we are.

Senators, what matters is not our futures, not our own short-term destinies.

What matters is our democracy's destiny because I think many of us know people will not know who we are 100 years from now or 200 years from now, but what they will know is this: They will know what we did today, how we voted today. That is more important than who we are. It is a Republic, if we can keep it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. I intend later to address the specifics of Pennsylvania if and when an objection is raised in regard to Pennsylvania.

For now, I want to address my remarks to what I think is the fundamental question being posed by the objectors, and that is, does Congress have the constitutional authority to decide which States' electoral college votes should be counted and which should not based on how well we think they ran their elections? This is what the objectors are really asking us to do—to federalize elections by rejecting electoral college votes from States whose processes they say they disapprove of and thereby having Congress select the President of the United States instead of the American people.

The answer, Mr. President, is no, there is no such authority under the Constitution. The Constitution assigns to the States the responsibility to conduct elections. It is clear in article II, section 1. It leaves courts with the responsibility to adjudicate disputes, and it assigns to Congress the ministerial function of counting ballots, except for extreme circumstances, such as when a State sends competing slates of electors to Congress, which brings me to the 1877 President.

Some objectors claim to merely want a commission to conduct an audit and then let States decide whether to send electors. Well, first, the situations are not at all analogous.

In 1877, Congress had before it two slates of electors from several States. There are no Trump electors from swing States; there are just Biden electors.

Second, legislators from the swing States—they have already spoken. They have made their decision. They have chosen not to send us alternative electors.

Third, a commission—really? It is completely impractical, and we all know it, with 14 days to go before a constitutionally mandated inauguration.

Look at it this way: If the electors are right and it is Congress's job to sit in judgment on the worthiness of the States' electoral processes, what is the criteria for acceptable electoral processes? What investigations have been conducted of these processes? What body has deemed that certain States' processes are unacceptable? What opportunities were these States given to challenge the findings? Why are the objectors objecting only to swing States that President Trump lost? What about the ones he won? I don't know—North Carolina? What about California? They have ballot harvesting. I am told, if this is all supposed to be Congress's job, you would think we would have answers to these questions and procedures in place because we would have done this every 4 years, right? But we don't because it is not our job.

If we adopt this new precedent that we sit in judgment of States' processes, then we are federalizing the election law. We would necessarily have to establish the permissible criteria and rules for the States' elections.

The ballot harvesting example—it is illegal in some States; it is encouraged

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in others. Does it become mandatory or forbidden depending on who is in control of Congress? And, as the leader pointed out, it would be the end of the electoral college. The electoral college is the mechanism by which the people select the President. But if Congress gets to decide which States get to vote in the electoral college, then clearly Congress is electing the President, not the people. Whichever party controls both Houses of Congress would control the Presidency.

The public would never tolerate Congress picking the President instead of themselves, so they would abolish the electoral college, as many of our colleagues would like to do, and the end of the electoral college, of course, means the Nation will be governed by a handful of big blue States and regions that can drum up very large numbers.

Mr. President, the Constitution does not assign to Congress the responsibility to judge the worthiness of State election processes nor its adherence to its rules. That is the responsibility of the States and the courts.

Let me conclude with this. I voted for President Trump. I publicly endorsed President Trump. I campaigned for President Trump. I did not want Joe Biden to win this election. There is something more important to me than having my preferred candidate sworn in as the next President, and that is to have the American people's chosen candidate sworn in as the next President.

A fundamental defining feature of a democratic republic is the right of the people to elect their own leaders. It is now our duty. It is our responsibility to ensure that right is respected in this election and preserved for future elections. I urge you to vote against this objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Senator from the great State of Arizona, Senator SINEMA.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Arizona.

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise today to share the facts about Arizona's recent election and to urge my colleagues to step away from divisive political rhetoric and step towards renewing Americans' faith in our democracy.

The 2020 Arizona election was a success, not for any one party or individual but as a demonstration of the will of the voters. A record 80 percent of registered voters participated, thanks to local Arizona election officials who ensured our system worked and our laws were upheld. Arizona has offered early voting for more than 100 years, and our vote-by-mail system includes strict safeguards. All ballots include tracking mechanisms and tamper-resistant envelopes. Election staff are trained to authentic signatures. And Arizona imposes severe criminal punishments for ballot tampering.

The Arizona election produced bipartisan results in which members of both

parties won races, and these results have been confirmed by stakeholders across the political spectrum.

The Republican chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors said:

No matter how you voted, this election was administered with integrity, transparency, and . . . in accordance with Arizona State laws.

The Republican speaker of the Arizona State House rejected calls for the legislature to overturn the election, saying:

As a conservative Republican, I don't like the results of the presidential election . . . but I cannot and will not entertain a suggestion that we violate current law to change the outcome.

Eight challenges contesting the Arizona election were brought to Federal and State courts. All eight were withdrawn or dismissed, including a unanimous ruling by the Arizona Supreme Court. The chief justice wrote:

[The] challenge fails to present any evidence of "misconduct," [or] "illegal votes" . . . let alone establish any degree of fraud or a sufficient error rate that would undermine the certainty of the election results.

During a recent committee hearing, I asked a simple question of the former Director of Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security: Did he find any evidence disputing the integrity or fairness of Arizona's election? His answer was simple: "No."

Arizona and our 15 counties should be congratulated for running a secure election. Perhaps the most heartening demonstration of Arizona's election success is Jocelyn from Phoenix. Jocelyn is 18 years old and was a first-time voter in 2020. So was Rachel from Tucson and thousand more Arizonans who for the first time exercised their constitutional right to decide their own leaders. Today's challenge to Arizona's election fails any factual analysis. More disturbingly, it seeks to rob Jocelyn and Rachel and more than 3 million Arizonans of a free, fair election.

Those of us who are trusted with elected office are first and foremost public servants. We serve our constituents. We do not seek to substitute our personal ambitions for the will of the American people. Our system allows for a continuous contest of ideas. And those voters who support the losing side of a free, fair election have not been disenfranchised; rather, they maintain just as important a voice in America's future. Leaders have a duty to serve all of our constituents, including those who voted for other candidates.

Great leaders in our history faced the choice of whether to take an action strengthening our democracy even if a different action would better serve their political ambitions. Many are revered today because they chose our Republic over their self-interests, including my personal hero, Senator John McCain. Following his Presidential loss, Senator McCain said:

The American people have spoken . . . Senator Obama and I have . . . argued our differences, and he has prevailed. . . . Whatever our differences, we are fellow Americans.

He spoke to the nearly 60 million Americans who voted for him, saying:

It is natural tonight to feel some disappointment, but tomorrow we must move beyond it and work together to get our country moving again.

Senator McCain was right.

Today we have serious, significant work to do beating this pandemic and reviving our economy. I urge my colleagues to follow the example of Senator John McCain and so many others, reject this meritless challenge, and uphold the will of Arizona's voters.

Thank you.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Oklahoma, Senator LANKFORD.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, in America, we settle our differences in elections. What happens if you don't trust the election count or you are concerned that so many courts denied or dismissed cases within hours after they were given thousands of pages of evidence?

The reason we have a Congress to settle our Nation's divisions and the rules of the Senate make sure that every opinion in the Nation is heard is so issues like this can be addressed.

The constitutional crisis in our country right now is that millions of Americans are being told to sit down and shut up. Their opinions matter.

During the electoral challenge on January 6, 2005, Senator Ted Kennedy stood on this floor and said this. He said:

I commend the many thousands of citizens in Massachusetts and other States who insisted that treating today's electoral vote count in Congress as a meaningless ritual would be an insult to our democracy unless we register our own protest against the obviously-flawed voting process that took place in so many States. We are hopeful that this major issue that goes to the heart of our democracy is now firmly implanted on the agenda for effective action by . . . Congress.

I agree. The U.S. Constitution does not allow me to assign different electors to a State, nor should it. The U.S. Constitution does not give the option to the Vice President of the United States to just unilaterally decide which States are in and out, and it should not. Each State decides its electors through its people.

A small group of Senators, including myself, have demanded that we not ignore the questions that millions of people are asking in our Nation, so we have proposed a constitutional solution. Pause the count. Get more facts to the States before January the 20th. We proposed a 15-member commission, just like what was done after the failed election of 1876. We are encouraging people to spend 10 days going through all the issues so States can have one

last opportunity to address any challenges. Then the States, as the Constitution directs, would make the final decision on their electors.

I have some colleagues who have said that a 10-day commission is not enough time, so they have counterproposed just ignoring the lingering questions.

We need to do something.

(Mr. GRASSLEY assumed the Chair.)

Mr. LANKFORD. My challenge today is not about the good people of Arizona.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 2:13 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 8:06 p.m. when called to order by the Vice President of the United States.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Vice President, as President of the Senate, would like to give a brief statement with the indulgence of the Senate.

Today was a dark day in the history of the United States Capitol, but thanks to the swift efforts of U.S. Capitol Police, Federal, State, and local law enforcement, the violence was quelled, the Capitol is secured, and the people's work continues.

We condemn the violence that took place here in the strongest possible terms. We grieve the loss of life that took place in these hallowed Halls, as well as the injuries suffered by those who defended our Capitol today. And we will always be grateful to the men and women who stayed at their posts to defend this historic place.

To those who wreaked havoc in our Capitol today, you did not win. Violence never wins. Freedom wins. And this is still the People's House.

As we reconvene in this Chamber, the world will again witness the resilience and strength of our democracy, for even in the wake of unprecedented violence and vandalism at this Capitol, the elected representatives of the people of the United States have assembled again on the very same day to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

May God bless the lost, the injured, and the heroes forged on this day. May God bless all who serve here and those who protect this place. And may God bless the United States of America.

Let's get back to work.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader and the Democratic leader be allowed to speak and that the time not count against the 2 hours of debate in relation to the objection raised on the State of Arizona.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I want to say to the American people, the United States Senate will not be intimidated.

We will not be kept out of this Chamber by thugs, mobs, or threats. We will not bow to lawlessness or intimidation.

We are back at our posts. We will discharge our duty under the Constitution and for our Nation, and we are going to do it tonight.

This afternoon, Congress began the process of honoring the will of the American people and counting the electoral college votes. We have fulfilled this solemn duty every 4 years for more than two centuries. Whether our Nation has been at war or at peace, under all manner of threats, even during an ongoing armed rebellion and the Civil War, the clockwork of our democracy has carried on.

The United States and the United States Congress have faced down much greater threats than the unhinged crowd we saw today. We have never been deterred before, and we will not be deterred today.

They tried to disrupt our democracy. They failed. They failed.

This failed attempt to obstruct the Congress, this failed insurrection, only underscores how crucial the task before us is for our Republic.

Our Nation was founded precisely so that the free choice of the American people is what shapes our self-government and determines the destiny of our Nation—not fear, not force, but the peaceful expression of the popular will.

We assembled this afternoon to count our citizens' votes and to formalize their choice of the next President. Now we are going to finish exactly what we started. We will complete this process the right way, by the book. We will follow our precedents, our laws, and our Constitution to the letter, and we will certify the winner of the 2020 Presidential election.

Criminal behavior will never dominate the United States Congress. This institution is resilient. Our democratic Republic is strong. The American people deserve nothing less.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it is very, very difficult to put into words what has transpired today. I have never lived through or even imagined an experience like the one we have just witnessed in this Capitol. President Franklin Roosevelt set aside December 7, 1941, as a day that "will live in infamy." Unfortunately, we can now add January 6, 2021, to that very short list of dates in American history that will live forever in infamy.

This temple to democracy was desecrated, its windows smashed, and our offices vandalized. The world saw America's elected officials hurriedly ushered out because they were in harm's way. The House and Senate floor were places of shelter until the

evacuation was ordered, leaving rioters to stalk these hallowed Halls, Lawmakers and our staffs, average citizens who love their country and serve it every day, feared for their lives. I understand that one woman was shot and tragically lost her life. We mourn her and feel for her friends and family.

These images were projected to the world. Foreign Embassies cabled their home capitals to report on the harrowing scenes at the very heart of our democracy. This will be a stain on our country not so easily washed away—the final, terrible, indelible legacy of the 45th President of the United States and undoubtedly our worst.

I want to be very clear. Those who performed these reprehensible acts cannot be called protestors. No, these were rioters and insurrectionists, goons and thugs, domestic terrorists. They do not represent America. These were a few thousand violent extremists who tried to take over the Capitol Building and attack our democracy. They must and should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, hopefully, by this administration; if not, certainly by the next. They should be provided no leniency.

I want to thank the many in the Capitol Hill Police and Secret Service and local police who kept us safe today and worked to clear the Capitol and return it to its rightful owners and its rightful purpose. I want to thank the leaders, Democratic and Republican, House and Senate. It was Speaker PELOSI, Leader MCCONNELL, Leader MCCARTHY, and myself who came together and decided that these thugs would not succeed and that we would finish the work that our Constitution requires us to complete in the very legislative Chambers of the House and Senate that were desecrated but we know always belong to the people and do again tonight.

But make no mistake—make no mistake, my friends—today's events did not happen spontaneously. The President who promoted the conspiracy theories that motivated these thugs, the President who exhorted them to come to our Nation's Capital egged them on. He hardly ever discourages violence and more often encourages it. This President bears a great deal of the blame.

This mob was, in good part, President Trump's doing, incited by his words and his lies. This violence, in good part, is his responsibility and his everlasting shame. Today's events certainly—certainly—would not have happened without him.

Now January 6 will go down as one of the darkest days in recent American history—a final warning to our Nation about the consequences of a demagogic President, the people who enable him, the captive media that parrot his lies, and the people who follow him as he attempts to push America to the brink of ruin.

As we reconvene tonight, let us remember, in the end, all this mob has really accomplished is to delay our

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work by a few hours. We will resume our responsibilities now, and we will finish our task tonight. The House and Senate Chambers will be restored good as new and ready for legislating in short order.

The counting of the electoral votes is our sacred duty. Democracy's roots in this Nation are deep; they are strong; and they will not be undone, ever, by a group of thugs. Democracy will triumph, as it has for centuries.

So to my fellow Americans who were shocked and appalled by the images on their televisions today and who are worried about the future of this country, let me speak to you directly. The divisions in our country clearly run deep, but we are a resilient, forward-looking, and optimistic people. And we will begin the hard work of repairing this Nation tonight because here in America we do hard things. In America, we always overcome our challenges.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. Vice President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Oklahoma, Senator LANKFORD.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. Vice President, you said things more eloquently than how we say it in Oklahoma. In Oklahoma, we say something like: Why in God's name would someone think attacking law enforcement and occupying the United States Capitol is the best way to show that you are right? Why would you do that?

Rioters and thugs don't run the Capitol. We are the United States of America. We disagree on a lot of things, and we have a lot of spirited debate in this room, but we talk it out, and we honor each other, even in our disagreements. That person, that person, and that person is not my enemy. That is my fellow American. And while we disagree on things, and disagree strongly at times, we do not encourage what happened today—ever.

Now, I want to join my fellow Senators in saying thank you to the Capitol Hill Police, the law enforcement, the National Guard, the Secret Service who stood in harm's way. While we were here debating, they were pushing back. And I was literally interrupted mid-sentence speaking here because we were all unaware of what was happening right outside this room because of their faithfulness and because of what they have done. I want to thank them.

Ronald Reagan once said: Peace is not the absence of conflict. It is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.

The peaceful people in my State of Oklahoma want their questions answered, but they don't want this, what happened today. They want to do the right thing, and they also want to do it the right way. They want to honor the constitutional process, but they also

want to have debate about election security because they want to make sure it is right, which is why it is an important issue that still needs to be resolved.

Transparency in government just doesn't seem like a bad idea. Obviously, the Commission that we have asked for is not going to happen at this point, and I understand that. And we are headed tonight toward the certification of Joe Biden to be the President of the United States, and we will work together in this body to be able to set a peaceful example in the days ahead.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Nevada, Senator CORTEZ MASTO.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. Vice President, I know that this room is full of leaders of both parties who love this country, and many believe that for America to succeed, our politics must find common ground. That has never been clearer than today, when armed rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol, emboldened by President Trump's false and inflammatory rhetoric about the 2020 elections.

I believe that we, in this Chamber, have a special duty as leaders to work together to lower the temperature of our politics, and I hope that my colleagues, who have questioned the legitimacy of this election in Arizona and all of these other States, now see the dire and dangerous consequences of sowing doubt and uncertainty.

I also know that, as U.S. Senators, we all take solemnly the oath we swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. At this moment in history, I can think of nothing more patriotic than renewing our faith in the Charters of Freedom that our Founding Fathers crafted for our Republic, starting with the fundamental American principle in our Declaration of Independence that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

The people have spoken in this election, and our only job here today is to do what they ask. It is not to argue election security. That is not the place for what we are doing today.

Our Constitution specifically reserves to the people the right to meet in their respective States and vote for the President and Vice President. As a result, individual States oversee and implement the election process, not the Federal Government.

To guard against fraud or irregularities in the voting process, the States are required to have robust election security measures. Likewise, State legislatures have the opportunity to examine evidence of voter fraud before they certify their electoral college votes. And our courts—from district courts to the United States Supreme Court—adjudicate legal challenges and election

disputes. All of those things happened after the 2020 election.

Statehouses and courts across the country took allegations of voter fraud seriously and followed the constitutional process to hear challenges to this year's election. No State found evidence of any widespread voter fraud and neither did any court ask to review the State's findings.

In Arizona, Republican Governor Doug Ducey; the Democratic secretary of state, Katie Hobbs; the Republican attorney general, Mark Brnovich; and the State supreme court chief justice, Robert Brutinel all certified the results of the election on November 30.

And we know—we have heard—Arizonans have been voting by mail for almost 30 years, and Governor Ducey has expressed confidence in the State's process numerous times. In November, he said:

We do elections well here in Arizona. The system is strong, and that is why I have bragged on it so much.

He further stated:

We have some of the strongest election laws in the country, laws that prioritize accountability and clearly lay out our procedures for conducting, canvassing and even contesting the results.

And they are right. Arizona has one of the most transparent election processes in the country with built-in accountability, starting with the internal auditing.

We have heard unfounded allegations that voting machines in Arizona and elsewhere somehow changed vote tallies or somehow improperly rejected ballots while claiming to accept them. These allegations all ignore the fact that Arizona counties conducted ballot audits by hand to double-check the machine counts, and these audits found no widespread fraud or irregularities.

Maricopa County, the county where more than 60 percent of the State's population resides, conducted a post-election hand count audit in the week after the election, which showed perfect, 100 percent, accuracy in the machine tabulations. So why would we need, my colleagues, to call for a 10-day emergency audit to be conducted by a legislative commission when it has already been done by the State of Arizona? What happened to State's rights?

The audit involved checking ballots for the Presidential election but also ballots for Federal and State legislative elections. The audit report shows every precinct's machine and hand count totals for each of the races audited, and for every single race in every precinct, the difference between the hand count and the machine count was zero. Maricopa's audit report stated: No discrepancies were found by the hand count audit boards.

Seeking to find any reason to contest these results, some of the State Republicans then tried to claim that Maricopa County failed to follow State law in conducting this audit by selecting voting center locations to audit instead of voting precincts. This was

wrong. And this, too, went to a court. In rejecting this claim, the State court in Arizona found that the county followed the properly issued guidance on hand audit procedures from the Arizona Secretary of State. And the court found that Maricopa County officials, therefore, could not lawfully have performed the hand count audit the way the plaintiffs wanted it done. If they had done so, they would have exposed themselves to criminal punishment.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator's 5 minutes has expired.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. I would close by just saying, please, my colleagues, do not disenfranchise the voters of Arizona and certify their votes tonight.

Thank you.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. Vice President, I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Utah, Senator LEE.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. Vice President, from the time I prepared my remarks for today, it seems like a lifetime ago. A lot has changed in the last few hours. So I am going to deliver some of the same remarks, but it has a little bit of a different feel than it would have just a few hours ago.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the family members of those who have been injured or killed today. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to the Capitol Hill Police who valiantly defended our building and our lives.

While it is true that legitimate concerns have been raised with regard to how some of the key battleground States conducted their Presidential elections, this is not the end of the story. We each have to remember that we swore an oath to uphold, protect, and defend this document, written nearly two and a half centuries ago by wise men raised up by God for that very purpose. That document makes clear what our role is and what it isn't. It makes clear who does what when it comes to deciding Presidential elections.

You see, because in our system of government, Presidents are not directly elected. They are chosen by Presidential electors, and the Constitution makes very clear, under article II, section 1, that the States shall appoint Presidential electors according to procedures that their legislatures develop. Then comes the 12th Amendment. It explains what we are doing here today in the Capitol. It explains that the President of the Senate—the Vice President of the United States—shall open the ballots, “and the votes shall then be counted.” It is those words that confine, define, and constrain every scrap of authority that we have in this process.

Our job is to open and then count. Open, then count—that is it. That is all there is.

There are, of course, rare instances—instances in which multiple slates of

electors can be submitted by the same State. That doesn't happen very often. It happened in 1960. It happened in 1876. Let's hope it doesn't ever happen again. In those rare moments, Congress has to make a choice. It has to decide which of the electoral votes will be counted and which will not. That did not happen here—thank heavens—and let's hope that it never does.

Many of my colleagues have raised objections or had previously stated their intent to raise objections with regard to these. I have spent an enormous time on this issue over the last few weeks. I have met with lawyers on both sides of the issue, and I have met with lawyers representing the Trump campaign, reading everything I can find about the constitutional provisions in question, and I have spent a lot of time on the phone with legislators and other leaders from the contested States. I didn't initially declare my position because I didn't yet have one.

I wanted to get the facts first, and I wanted to understand what was happening. I wanted to give the people serving in government in the contested States the opportunity to do whatever they felt they needed to do to make sure that their election was properly reflected. I spent an enormous amount of time reaching out to State government officials in those States, but in none of the contested States—no, not even one—did I discover any indication that there was any chance that any State legislature or secretary of state or Governor or Lieutenant Governor had any intention to alter the slate of electors. That being the case, our job is a very simple one.

This simply isn't how our Federal system is supposed to work. That is to say, if you have concerns with the way that an election in the Presidential race was handled in your State, the appropriate response is to approach your State legislatures, first and foremost.

These protests—hearing from those who have raised concerns—should have been focused on their State capitols, not the Nation's Capitol, because our role is narrow, our role is defined, our role is limited.

Yes, we are the election judges when it comes to Members elected to our own body. And, yes, the House of Representatives are the judges of their own races there.

We also have the authority to prescribe, as a Congress, rules governing the time, place, and manner of elections for Senators and Representatives. There is no corresponding authority with respect to Presidential elections—none whatsoever. It doesn't exist. Our job is to convene, to open the ballots, and to count them. That is it.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Colorado, Mr. BENNET.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Colleagues, it has been a terrible day for everybody here and for our country.

One of the things I was thinking about today is something I often think about when I am on this floor, which is that the Founders of this country, the people who wrote our Constitution, actually knew our history better than we know our history.

I was thinking about that history today, as we saw the mob riot in Washington, DC—thinking about what the Founders were thinking about when they wrote our Constitution, which was what happened to the Roman Republic when armed gangs, doing the work for politicians, prevented Rome from casting their ballots for consuls, for praetors, for senators. These were the officers in Rome, and these armed gangs ran through the streets of Rome, keeping elections from being started, keeping elections from ever being called. In the end, because of that, the Roman Republic fell, and a dictator took its place, and that was the end of the Roman Republic—or any republic, for that matter—until this beautiful Constitution was written in the United States of America.

So it is my fervent hope that the way we respond to this today, my dear colleagues, is that we give the biggest bipartisan vote we can in support of our democracy and in support of our Constitution and in rejection of what we saw today and what the Roman Republic saw in its own time.

There is a tendency around this place, I think, to always believe that we are the first people to confront something when that is seldom the case and to underappreciate what the effect of our actions will be. We need to deeply appreciate, in this moment, our obligation to the Constitution, our obligation to democracy, and our obligation to the Republic.

There are people in this Chamber who have twisted the words—twisted the words—of a statute written in the 19th century that was meant to actually settle our electoral disputes, to leave them with the States, as the Senator from Utah was saying, to give us a ministerial role, except in very rare circumstances. That is what that law is about that the Senator of Texas was talking about today. And that is the law that is leading us to be asked to overturn the judgments of 60 courts in America, many of the courts in Arizona, some of whom have howled the President's lawyers out of the courtrooms because there is no evidence of fraud.

By the way, the fact that 37 percent or 39 percent of Americans think there is evidence of fraud does not mean there is fraud. If you have turned a blind eye to a conspiracy theory, you can't now come to the floor of the Senate and say you are ignoring the people who believe that the election was stolen. Go out there and tell them the truth, which is that every single Member of this Senate knows this election

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wasn't stolen and that we, just as in the Roman Republic, have a responsibility to protect the independence of the judiciary from politicians who will stop at nothing to hold on to power. There is nothing new about that either. That has been true since the first republic was founded.

So now we find ourselves in the position, just days after many Senators here swore an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution—every single Member of the House of Representatives swore the same oath, as well, and I think we have a solemn obligation and responsibility here to prove, once again, that this country is a nation of laws and not of men, and the only result that we can reach together is one that rejects the claim of the Senator from Texas and the other Members of the House and Senate who seek to overturn the decisions that have been made by the States, by the voters in these States, and by the courts.

If we follow what they have proposed, we will be the ones who will have disenfranchised every single person who cast a vote in this election, whether they voted for the President or they didn't.

I urge you to reject this, and I deeply appreciate the opportunity to serve with every single one of you.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Georgia, Senator LOEFFLER.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Georgia.

Mrs. LOEFFLER. Mr. President, when I arrived in Washington this morning, I fully intended to object to the certification of the electoral votes. However, the events that have transpired today have forced me to reconsider, and I cannot now, in good conscience, object to the certification of these electors.

The violence, the lawlessness, and siege of the Halls of Congress are abhorrent and stand as a direct attack on the very institution my objection was intended to protect: the sanctity of the American democratic process. And I thank law enforcement for keeping us safe.

I believe that there were last-minute changes to the November 2020 election process and serious irregularities that resulted in too many Americans losing confidence not only in the integrity of our elections but in the power of the ballot as a tool of democracy. Too many Americans are frustrated at what they see as an unfair system. Nevertheless, there is no excuse for the events that took place in these Chambers today, and I pray that America never suffers such a dark day again.

Though the fate of this vote is clear, the future of the American people's faith in the core institution of this democracy remains uncertain. We as a body must turn our focus to protecting

the integrity of our elections and restoring every American's faith that their voice and their vote matter.

America is a divided country with serious differences, but it is still the greatest country on Earth. There can be no disagreement that upholding democracy is the only path to preserving our Republic.

I yield the floor.

(Applause.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield 2½ minutes to Senator BOOKER and 2½ minutes to Senator KAINE, in reverse order.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President and my colleagues, I applaud the comments of my colleague from Georgia deeply.

My first job after school was in Macon, GA, working for a Federal judge, Lanier Anderson. I learned a lot about integrity and a lot about law from him. I also learned some sad lessons, that in the history of Georgia—and, indeed, Virginia and many States—so many people, especially people of color, had been disenfranchised over the course of our history. Our late friend, John Lewis, a Congressman from Georgia, was savagely beaten on Bloody Sunday just for marching for voting rights. That act of violence inspired this body, the U.S. Senate, to come together in March of 1965 and work to pass, in a bipartisan fashion, the Voting Rights Act.

We should be coming together today—after acts of violence—as a U.S. Senate, to affirm the votes of all who cast ballots in November. Instead, we are contemplating an unprecedented objection that would be a massive disenfranchisement of American voters.

The Georgia result was very clear: a 12,000-vote margin, 2 certifications by Republican officials, 4 separate recounts and canvases, 7 lawsuits, as in the other States. If we object to results like this, the message is so clear. We are saying to States: No matter how secure and accurate your elections are, we will gladly overthrow them if we don't like who you voted for. But, more importantly, what we will be saying—really, what we will be doing—is as the body that acted together to guarantee Americans the right to vote, we will become the agent of one of the most massive disenfranchisements in the history of this country.

So I urge all of my colleagues: Please oppose these objections.

Thank you.

I yield to my colleague from New Jersey.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. Vice President, I can only think of two times in American history that individuals laid siege to our Capitol, stormed our sacred civic spaces, and tried to upend and overrun this government. One was in the War of 1812, and the other one was today.

What is interesting about the parallel between the two is they both were waving flags to a sole sovereign, to an individual, surrendering democratic principles to the cult of personality. One was a monarch in England, and the other were the flags I saw all over our Capitol, including in the hallways and in this room, to a single person named Donald Trump.

The sad difference between these two times is one was yet another nation in the history of our country that tried to challenge the United States of America, but this time, we brought this hell upon ourselves.

My colleague from Texas said that this was a moment where there were unprecedented allegations of voter fraud. Yes, that is true. They were unprecedented when the President, before the election even happened, said: If I lose this election, then the election was rigged.

That is unprecedented. It is unprecedented that, before the night of the counting of the vote was even done, that he called it rigged. It is unprecedented that he is fanning the flames of conspiracy theory to create a smoke-screen in this Nation to cover what he is trying to do, which is undermine our democratic principles.

But it is not just that. The shame of this day is it is being aided and abetted by good Americans who are falling prey, who are choosing Trump over truth, who are surrendering to the passion of lies as opposed to standing up and speaking truth to power, who are trying to fundraise off of the shame of conspiracy theories as opposed to doing the incalculably valuable, patriotic thing: to speak truth to our Nation. Our democracy is wounded, and I saw it when I saw pictures of yet another insurgency, of a flag of another group of Americans who tried to challenge our Nation. I saw the flag of the Confederacy there.

What will we do? How will we confront this shame? How will we confront this dark second time in American history? I pray that we remember a Georgian and his words. All I can say is we must, in spirit, join together like those Georgians on a bridge called the Edmund Pettus, who joined hands, who were called threats to our democracy, who were called outrageous epithets when they sought to expand our democracy, to save it, to heal it—when they joined arm in arm and said what we should say now, commit ourselves to that ideal, that together, we shall overcome.

(Applause.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. Vice President, I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Nebraska, Mr. SASSE.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. Vice President, I want to say, before we begin, thank you for the way you have fulfilled your constitutional duties and your oath of

office today. Obviously, it hasn't been easy.

Colleagues, today has been ugly. When I came to the floor this morning, I planned to talk about the lesson of 1801 because I am kind of a history nerd, and I wanted to celebrate the glories of the peaceful transition of power across our Nation's history. It feels a little naive now to talk about ways that American civics might be something that could unite us and bring us back together.

Now, 1801 blew everybody's mind all over the world, by the way. John Adams loses to Thomas Jefferson, and Adams willingly leaves the Executive mansion and moves back to Massachusetts, and Jefferson peacefully assumes power. People all over Europe said: That must be fake news. Those must be bad reports. There is no way any Executive would ever willingly lay down power. Yet Adams, in defeat, did something glorious to give all of us a gift.

I wanted to celebrate that, and it feels a little bit harder now. This building has been desecrated. Blood has been spilled in the hallways. I was with octogenarian Members of this Chamber who needed to have troops and police stabilize them to get down the stairs at a time when a lot of our staffs were panicked and under their desks and not knowing what was going to happen to them.

It was ugly today. But you know what? It turns out that when something is ugly, talking about beauty isn't just permissible; talking about beauty is obligatory in a time like that. Why? Why would we talk about beauty after the ugliness of today? Because our kids need to know that this isn't what America is. What happened today isn't what America is.

They have been given a glorious inheritance for the 59th Presidential election. If the Vice President wasn't in the Chair and if the President pro tempore was, I would have made some joke that CHUCK GRASSLEY has voted in two-thirds of those 59 Presidential elections. He is laughing. It is not as good as "hit deer, deer dead," but it still got a Grassley laugh.

I don't think we want to tell the Americans that come after us that this republic is broken, that this is just a banana republic, that our institutions can't be trusted. I don't think we want that. We don't want that in this body, and we don't want that in our hometowns. I don't think we want to tell our kids that America's best days are behind us—because it is not true. That is not who we are. America isn't Hatfields' and McCoy's blood feud forever. America is a union.

There is a lot that is broken in this country but not anything that is so big that the American people can't rebuild it, that freedom and community and entrepreneurial effort and that neighborhoods can't rebuild. Nothing that is broken is so big that we can't fix it.

Generations of our forefathers and our foremothers—probably not a

word—and our ancestors have spilled blood to defend the glories of this republic. Why would they do that? Because America is the most exceptional nation in the history of the world and because the Constitution is the greatest political document that has ever been written. Most governments in the past have said might makes right, and we saw some of that hooligan nuttury today. Might makes right. No, it doesn't.

God gives us rights by nature, and government is just our shared project to secure those rights. America has always been about what we choose to do together, the way we reaffirm our constitutional system. We have some governmental tasks, and we all in this body could do better at those governmental tasks, but the heart of America is not government. The center of America is not Washington, DC.

The center of America is the neighborhoods where 330 million Americans are raising their kids and trying to put food on the table and trying to love their neighbor. That is the center of America.

We are not supposed to be the most important people in America. We are supposed to be servant leaders who try to maintain a framework for ordered liberty so that there is a structure that, back home where they live, they can get from the silver-framed structure and order to the golden apple at the center, as Washington would have said, which is the things that they build together, the places where they coach little league, the places where they invite people to synagogue or church.

Sometimes, the biggest things we do together are governmental, like kicking Hitler's ass or like going to the moon. Sometimes, there is governmental stuff. But the heart of America is about places where moms and dads are raising kids, and we are supposed to serve them by maintaining order and by rejecting violence. You can't do big things like that if you hate your neighbors. You can't do big things together as Americans if you think other Americans are the enemy.

Look, there is a lot of uncertainty about the future. I get it. There is a lot that does need to be rebuilt. But if you are angry—I want to beg you—don't let the screamers who monetize hate have the final word. Don't let needlists become your drug dealers. There are some who want to burn it all down. We met some of them today.

But they aren't going to win. Don't let them be your prophets—instead, organize, persuade, but most importantly, love your neighbor. Visit the widower down the street who is lonely and doesn't want to tell anybody that his wife died and he doesn't have a lot of friends. Shovel somebody's driveway. You can't hate somebody who just shoveled your driveway.

The heart of life is about community and neighborhood, and we are supposed to be servant leaders. The constitu-

tional system is still the greatest order for any government ever, and it is our job to steward it and protect it.

Let's remember that today when we vote.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Illinois. Mr. DURBIN.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Vice President, in March of 1861, a Springfield lawyer caught a train to Washington. His name was Abraham Lincoln. It wasn't his first trip there. He served as Congressman 15 years before and returned in the beginning of the Civil War to serve as President.

It was a different place than he knew as a Congressman. In 15 years, it had changed a lot. The Sprigg's boarding house across the street, which is now the Library of Congress, was gone. And this building was changing—big changes. They were building a dome on the Capitol. But they were also in the earliest days of war, and President Lincoln was counseled: Stop building the dome. It costs too much money. We can't spend any more time on it.

And he said: No. We are going to build that dome, and we are going to finish it. That dome and this building will be a symbol of this country that will survive this Civil War and come back strong.

So they built the dome. They won the war. And since those days, that dome and this building have been a symbol to this country, a symbol of unity and of hope.

Tours come through here—before COVID-19—by the tens of thousands. If you have ever noticed their tours, they are often shushed. People are saying: Show some respect for this building.

We know this building and the Rotunda as a place where some of the greatest American heroes of both political parties lie in state, and we go there to honor them. We know this building because we work here. We enact laws here that change America. We gather for State of the Union messages from Presidents and honor the people in the gallery.

This is a special place. This is a sacred place. But this sacred place was desecrated by a mob today, on our watch. This temple to democracy was defiled by thugs who roamed the halls and sat in that chair, Mr. Vice President, the one that you vacated at 2:15 this afternoon—sat and posed for pictures, those who were roaming around in this Chamber.

What brought this on? Did this mob spring spontaneously from America? No. This mob was invited to come to Washington on this day, by this President, for one reason: because he knew the electoral college vote was going to be counted this day. He wanted this mob to disrupt the constitutional process which we are part of. This mob was inspired by a President who cannot accept defeat.

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If you wonder whether I am going too far in what I say, just read the transcript with the secretary of state from Georgia and listen to this President's wild conspiracy theories, one after the other, swatted down by that Republican-elected official and his attorney as having no basis in fact. This President begs, he coaxes, he even threatens that secretary of state to find the votes he needs. In any other venue, that would be a simple, obvious crime.

The lengths he will go to are obvious. The Texas Senator says to us: Well, many people still agree with him, you know, when it gets down to the bottom line. Many people have fallen for this Presidential position that it must have been a rigged election if I lost.

Well, I would say that after—we have lost count—57 lawsuits, 62 lawsuits—I have heard so many different numbers—after 90 different judges; after this President took his case, the best he could put together, to the highest Court in the land across the street, where he had personally chosen three Justices on the Supreme Court—and I say to the Senator from Texas that he knows much more about that Court than I do—I don't believe they let that paper that he sent up there even hit the desk before they laughed it out of the Court. And that is the best he had to offer—no evidence whatsoever of this rigged election and this fraudulence.

The Senator from Texas says: We just want to create a little commission, 10 days; we are going to audit all of the States—particularly the ones in contention here—and find out what actually occurred.

And it really draws its parallel to 1876, to Hayes and Tilden. Don't forget what that commission—that so-called political compromise—achieved. It was not just some ordinary governmental commission. It was a commission that killed reconstruction, that established Jim Crow, that—even after a civil war, which tore this Nation apart, it re-enslaved African-Americans, and it was a commission that invited voter suppression we are still fighting today in America.

Let me close by saying this. The vote we are going to have here is a clear choice of whether we are going to feed the beast of ignorance or we are going to tell the truth to the American people. We saw that beast today roaming the halls. Let's not invite it back.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Kansas, Senator MARSHALL.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Thank you, Mr. President.

Freedom of speech and the freedom to protest are provided in our Constitution. While I share the same frustration many Americans have over the Presidential election, the violence and mob rule that occurred at the U.S. Cap-

itol today and across the country over the past year are unacceptable, and I condemn them at the highest level. Like all of us in the Chamber, I am thankful for the heroic law enforcement officers who worked feverishly to restore order so that we get back to the electoral certification process.

During my 29-year career as an obstetrician and gynecologist, too often I had to sit down with patients and give them a very bad diagnosis. It might have been a young mother of three whose three babies I delivered, now with metastatic breast cancer, or perhaps another woman with advanced cervical or ovarian cancer, all of which have very challenging prognoses. But before I sat down with each one of those patients, I carefully reviewed all the labs, their x rays, and the pathology to make sure I had the facts straight, but at the end of the day, my final recommendation was always going to be a recommendation from my heart.

I want my fellow Kansans and all Americans to know that I have given as much consideration and thought surrounding the issue of objecting to a State's electoral college votes as I did considering the treatment plan for a serious health concern, and today's decision once again is from my heart.

Mr. President, I rise today to restore integrity to our Republic, and I rise to do it knowing that many of our colleagues are all concerned for current and future generations. We must restore faith and confidence in one of our Republic's most hallowed and patriotic duties: voting.

There is no question our U.S. Constitution empowers State legislatures to execute free, legal, and fair elections. Unfortunately, in several States, the clear authority of those State legislatures to determine the rules for voting was usurped by Governors, secretaries of state, and activist courts. Our laws and Constitution should always be followed, especially in a time of crisis.

I don't rise to undo a State's legally obtained electoral college votes; rather, I rise in hopes of improving the integrity of the ballot to hold States accountable to the time-proven constitutional system of the electoral college.

This is why I urge the formation of an electoral commission to give constructive suggestions and recommendations that States can take to make our elections once again safe, free, and fair after a year of jarring irregularities.

We must and will have a peaceful transition of power.

To all my fellow Americans, I have no doubt that our Republic can grow stronger through this difficult day.

May God bless this great Republic.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The minority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Illinois, Senator DUCKWORTH.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. In 2004, I packed up my rucksack, laced up my boots,

and deployed to Iraq, ready to sacrifice whatever was asked of me, all because I love this Nation—willing to sacrifice my life, if needed, because I believe in the sanctity of our electoral system, which had declared George W. Bush my Commander in Chief.

I earned my wounds proudly fighting in a war I did not support on the orders of a President I did not vote for because I believed in and I still do believe in the values of our Nation; because I believe in a government of, by, and for the people, where voters—voters—choose who leads them, not the other way around.

I have spent my entire adult life defending our democracy, but I never—never—thought it would be necessary to defend it from an attempted violent overthrow in our Nation's own Capitol Building. Well, I refuse to let anyone intent on instigating chaos or inciting violence deter me from carrying out my constitutional duties.

You know, when my Army buddies and I raised our right hands, when 45,000 troops in Arizona raised their right hands and swore to protect and defend the Constitution, we did not qualify our oaths by saying that we would follow orders only when the Commander in Chief was someone whose election we were happy with.

Just like when every Senator in this Chamber was sworn into office, we didn't mutter under our breath that we discharge our duties only when it served our political interests or helped us to avoid the wrath of a petty, insecure, wannabe tin-pot dictator on the precipice of losing power and relevance. No, there is no ambiguity here—Joe Biden won the election with a record number of votes, Republican officials nationwide confirmed those results, including in Arizona, as has judge after Trump-appointed judge. Even Trump's Attorney General admitted that the U.S. Department of Justice had not found widespread fraud that would have affected the outcome.

Yet still many of my Republican colleagues are asking us to ignore all of that. With no evidence of their own, they are asking us to ignore court rulings, ignore Republican-elected officials, and even worse, ignore the will of the people across this vast, great Nation by trying to overturn this election. They are placing more trust in Reddit conspiracy theories than the Constitution, proving that appeasing Trump is more important to them than protecting the most basic tenet of our Republic—the adherence to free and fair elections.

If there is one thing I know, it is that my troops didn't sign up to defend our democracy in war zones thousands of miles away only to watch it crumble in these hallowed halls here at home. Yet that is what this effort amounts to—an attempt to subvert our democracy. In the process, it is threatening what makes America American, because in this country—in this country—the power of the people has always